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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

CONFLICTS EXPERIENCED BY ADMINISTRATORS OF NURSING EDUCATION PROGRAMS

BY

DOROTHY ISOBEL EISERMAN

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Edmonton, Alberta
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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommended to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled CONFLICTS EXPERIENCED BY ADMINISTRATORS OF NURSING EDUCATION PROGRAMS submitted by Dorothy Isobel Eiserman in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY.

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ABSTRACT

Education administrators (including those responsible for nursing programs) have few resources to assist them when dealing with the inevitable conflicts they encounter. A review of the literature reveals few studies into the nature of conflict in education settings. Most investigations have been conducted in profit motivated organizations, politics, or labour relations. However, education researchers have begun to identify significant differences in conflict situations between education and business organizations.

Therefore, the general research question that guided this study was "What is the nature of conflict experienced by nursing educational administrators?"

The study used a "constructivist" approach to gather data from nursing educational administrators regarding the nature of conflicts they had encountered. Grounded theory techniques were employed to guide data collection and analysis. Four community college and five university nursing educational administrators from across Canada volunteered to participate in the study.

Analysis of the informants' stories revealed a number of concepts and categories related to the sources of conflicts encountered in nursing education administration, factors that influenced these conflicts, strategies employed to manage them, the effectiveness of the strategies, and the outcomes of the conflicts.

Sources of conflicts included a concern for students, diffuse power structure, professional status of nursing, information problems, attacks on integrity, distribution of resources, and gender issues. Issues related to ethics and values emerged in relation to most conflicts. Management strategies that

the nursing educational administrators employed encompassed exercise control, foster collaborative problem solving, manage affect, manage climate, manage information, and seek support.

The Thomas (1976) model of conflict management, frequently cited in the educational administration literature, was compared with the findings of the study. Although limited support was identified the model was found to lack robustness when applied to management of the conflicts discussed by the nursing educational administrators.

The core notion emerging from this study was that the conflicts encountered by nursing educational administrators were complex social processes involving multiple stakeholders. It was also possible to postulate additional premises and propositions. For example, concern for students is an overriding issue for nursing educational administrators and control is most often used to manage conflict when student or client safety is involved.

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Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1 - THE PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES 1

The Problem 1

Statement of the Problem 1

Objectives of the Study 2

CHAPTER 2 - REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction 4

Causes of Conflict 4

Introduction 4

Affect and Attacks on Personal Integrity 4

Participants 5

Perceptions of Professional Role 6

Summary 8

Types of Conflict 8

Introduction 8

Interorganizational Conflict 8

Interpersonal Conflict 10

Intrapersonal Conflict 10

Summary 11

Conflict Management Strategies 11

Introduction 11

Importance of Conflict Management 11

Strategies Used by School Administrators 12

Strategies Used by Teachers 14
Strategies Used in Post-Secondary Education 15
Summary 17
Influencing Factors 19
A Contigency Approach to Conflict Management 19
Summary 21
CHAPTER 3 - RESEARCH DESIGN 25
Concerns Generated by the Literature 25
Methodology 25
Introduction 25
Data Collection 26
Data Sources 28
Data Analysis 28
Trustworthiness 29
Pilot Study 30
Delimitations and Limitations 31
Ethical Considerations 31
CHAPTER 4 - FINDINGS OF THE STUDY 33
INTRODUCTION 33
Manifestations of Conflict 34
Sources of Conflict 34
Introduction 34
Concern for Students 36
Introduction 36

Quality of education 36
Students' psychological safety 40
Quality of students' performance 41
Summary 41

Diffuse Power Structure 42

Professional Status of Nursing 45
Introduction 45
Lack of trust in colleagues 45
Unclear role expectations 46
Need for further graduate education 46
Summary 47

Information Problems 47
Introduction 47
Problems related to quality of information 47
Problems related to flow of information 50
Summary 50

Attacks on Integrity 51

Distribution of Resources 51

Gender Issues 52
Introduction 52
Paternalistic attitudes 52
Exclusion 52
Summary 53

Summary 53

Factors That Influence Conflict 53

Introduction 53

Left-Over Problems 55

Time of Academic Year 55

Stability of Faculty 55

Ethnocultural Differences 55

Tradeoffs Within the Organization 56

Summary 56

Management Strategies 56

Introduction 56

Exercise Control 56
Introduction 56
Assist with remediation 58
Build a case 58
Bypass obstructions 58
Communicate parameters 59
Enforce parameters 59
Warn or confront 59
Remove a problem person 60
Summary 61

Foster Collaborative Problem Solving 61
Introduction 61
Initiate or encourage discussion 61
Mediate disputes 62
Manage negotiations 62
Redirect the responsibility 62
Seek the help and advice of others 62
Summary 63

Manage Affect 63
Introduction 63
Encourage catharsis 63
Manage own emotional responses 64
Act prudently without haste 64
Summary 65

Manage Climate 65
Introduction 65
Ascertaining others' concerns 65
Help others achieve personal goals 66
Help others to solve problems 66
Be principled 66
Follow recognized policies and procedures 67
Establish helpful structures and routines 67
Establish parameters 67
Model desired behaviour 68
Providing moral support 68
Summary 68

Manage Information 69
Introduction 69
Foster exchanges of information 69
Gather or receive information 69
Provide or seek clarification 69
Provide counselling 70
Share information 70
Use experts 70
Verify information 70
Summary 71

Seek Support 71

Summary 72

Effectiveness of the Management Strategies 72

Introduction 72

Strategy Effectiveness and Context 72

Strategies That Were Effective 74

Strategies Perceived as Effective 75

Strategies Perceived As Not Effective 75

Strategies That Were Not Effective 76

Summary 76

Outcomes of Conflict Situations 77

Introduction 77

Gains From Conflicts 77

Losses in Conflicts 79

Residual Effects of the Conflicts 80

Types of Conflict 81

Summary 82

CHAPTER 5 - DISCUSSION 84

Introduction 84

Conflict is Complex Social Phenomena 84

Types of Conflict 87

Sources of Conflict 89

Introduction 89
Concern for Students 91
Introduction 91
Instructor performance 91
Student performance 92
Affect 92
Summary 92

Diffuse Power Structure 93

Professional Status of Nursing 94

Information Problems 97

Attacks on Integrity 98

Issues Related to Ethics and Values 101

Distribution of Resources 105

Gender Issues 105

Summary 106

Factors that Influence Conflict 107

Manifestations of Conflict 109

Management Strategies 109

Introduction 109

Exercise Control 109

Foster Collaborative Problem Solving 111

Manage Affect 111

Manage Climate 112

Manage Information 113

Seek Support 114

Robustness of the Thomas Model 114
Introduction 114
Support for the Model 114
Strategies not accommodated by the Model 115
Robustness of the Model 116

Summary 116

Effectiveness of the Management Strategies 118

Outcomes of Conflict 119

Discussion Regarding Methodology 122

Conclusions and Implications 123

References 127

Appendix A. 132

LIST OF TABLES

1. Summary of Causes of Conflict in Education Settings 9

2. Conflict Management Strategies Used in Education Settings 18

3. Summary of the Literature on Conflict Causes, and Management Strategies, Influencing Factors 22

4. Affective Manifestations of Conflict Described by Nursing Educational Administrators 35

5. Concern for Students Exhibited by Nursing Educational Administrators 37

6. Information Problems Identified by Nursing Educational Administrators 48

7. Sources of Conflict Identified by Nursing Educational Administrators 54

8. Conflict Management Strategies Used by Nursing Educational Administrators 57

9. Outcomes of Conflict Situations Described by Nursing Educational Administrators 78

10. Comparison of Types of Conflict with Sources of Conflict Encountered 88

11. Comparison of Sources of Conflict 90

12. Comparison of Conflict Management Strategies 110

13. Premises or Propositions 124

14. Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations 125

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Contigency Model of Conflict Management Strategies 20

2. Conflict is a Complex Social Process 86

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES

The Problem

Conflict management is considered important in educational administration for these reasons:

1. Conflicts are inescapable and therefore an important aspect of administration.

2. Conflicts can have important negative effects (such as alienation and aggression) as well as positive outcomes (such as rejuvenation and innovation).

3. The effectiveness of administrators (and their schools) is related in some measure to the way conflicts are handled. (Fris, 1991a)

Even though administrators in educational settings are frequently called upon to manage conflict, there is a dearth of information in the literature regarding the nature of conflict in these settings. Educational administrators have few resources to assist them.

Statement of the Problem

To date, most of the studies of organizational conflict have centered on business and industrial organizations. However, educational researchers have begun to identify significant differences in conflict situations and their management between educational and business organizations. For example:

* One of the differences is the large number of stakeholder groups that educational administrators have to deal with. Iles (1984), in a case study of an Alberta school district, identified numerous stakeholders involved in the conflict examined, and each had distinct ethics, values, and needs. Similarly, Blumberg and Blumberg (1985) found that school superintendents deal with the public and multiple stakeholders to a much greater extent than do corporate executives.

* A second difference is the frequency with which professional role conflicts occur in educational settings. Boyd (1989) and Weisbord, Lawrence, and Charns (1978) found that professional role conflicts occur frequently in educational settings, and this frequency is not as high in business settings.

In research conducted in educational organizations, the findings are marked by disturbing inconsistencies (Fris, 1991b, p. 5). These anomalies may be associated with the following differences in the organizational settings or differences in the research methods used:

1. The participants in the few studies reported were diverse--they included school superintendents (Blumberg and Blumberg, 1985; Loewen, 1983; Wirt and Christovich; Zeigler, Kehoe, and Reisman, 1983), principals (Fris, 1990, 1991a, 1991b, 1992), teachers (Boyd, 1989), university administrators (Neff, 1986; Woodtli, 1987), and diploma nursing instructors (Valentine, 1988). While four of the studies examined the superintendents' view, only one or two studies have examined conflict from the perspective of the other groups.

2. The methodologies have varied, including case studies, descriptive interviews, and questionnaires normed in business organizations.

However, two things, at least, are clear. First, the information about conflict management that is available to administrators of educational organizations (including nursing educators) is not robust. Second, conflict research in educational settings is in its infancy and much more information is needed before premises, hypotheses, and theories related to conflict in those settings can be formulated with confidence. One specific need is information concerning the nature of conflicts encountered in nursing educational settings.

Objectives of the Study

The lack of clear, valid information available to nursing educational administrators regarding the conflicts they may encounter indicates a need for

further research. This study was designed to investigate the nature of conflicts in nursing educational administration. Accordingly, it was guided by the following general question:

What is the nature of conflict experienced by nursing educational administrators?

The more specific questions that guided the development of the study, the data gathering, and the analysis were as follows:

1. What were the antecedents and manifestations of the conflicts?
2. What did the participants do when confronted with conflicts?
3. What were the outcomes of the conflicts?
4. What theoretical propositions or hypotheses describe the nature of the conflicts and the administrators' responses?
5. How do these conceptual formulations compare with theorizing about conflict as presented in the literature?

Although these questions served to define the limits of the study, the design allowed for investigation of further questions, beyond the limits of the study as the need arose.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Research into conflicts that occur in educational organizations is sparse. The few studies that are reported in the literature seem to suggest that in educational organizations the causes and types of conflicts differ from those encountered in business organizations. Also, there appears to be differences in the management techniques used to address these conflicts. Selected research studies were reviewed in an attempt to identify these causes and types of conflict and the techniques used to manage them.

Causes of Conflict

Blumberg and Blumberg (1985), Fris (1991b), and Iles (1984) analyzed conflict occurring in the K-12 school system. Woodtli (1987) surveyed university deans of nursing. Blumberg and Blumberg (1985), Fris (1991b), and Iles (1984) found that the theoretical concepts identified in the literature, particularly those related to participants and causes, did not fit well when applied to educational administrators and educational organizations. Blumberg and Blumberg (1984) stated that one reason for the poor fit may be that educational administrators must deal with a much larger number of stakeholders than their counterparts in business.

Affect and Attacks on Personal Integrity

Fris (1991b; 1992a) interviewed school principals in a western Canadian province and in a large New Zealand city. He concluded that while the causes identified in the organizational literature "correspond closely to [those] which emerged in this investigation" there are important differences that must be considered (p. 13). Conflicts caused by affect (personality attributes and/or emotions) are not discussed at any length in the literature; however, Fris (1991b; 1992a) found that "it was the second most frequent cause in the

conflicts" described by the principals (p. 15). Fris (1991b) also found that attacks on personal integrity, while not identified as a cause of conflict in the literature, were identified as such by five of the 34 principals interviewed.

Woodtli (1987) found that university deans of nursing identified personality differences, or affective sources, as the second most frequent cause of conflict situations. The deans did not identify attacks on personal integrity as a cause of conflict. Woodtli used a forced answer survey instrument and this source of conflict was not included.

Participants

Blumberg and Blumberg (1985) reported, in their discussion of the role of superintendents of schools, that a large percentage of those senior administrators' time was involved with people. Examples include principals, board members, politicians, government officials, community members, and parents. These authors also found that superintendents must be very visible and accessible public figures because the public perceives them as the guardians of the education of the community's children. They are constantly involved in interorganizational and interpersonal conflict situations. They also experience intrapersonal role conflict because they were once teachers and now must exercise authority over teachers in the system.

Most business organizations do not have to consider the values and needs of a multiplicity of stakeholders. Also, their chief executive officers do not have to deal with the public to the extent that superintendents of schools do. Blumberg and Blumberg (1985) stated that while there are similarities in the roles the "additional factors in the superintendency that simply do not exist in the job of the corporate executive . . . make a qualitative difference between the essential characteristics of the two positions" (p. 188).

Iles (1984) identified the participants in a conflict situation that involved a school jurisdictional reorganization. They included the provincial Ministry of Education, seven school boards, several urban and rural municipalities, and a multiplicity of linguistic, religious, and ethnic groups with multiple and varied values, goals, expectations, and agendas. The economy of the area was also identified as a major factor in the dispute.

Johns (1988) and Putnam and Folger (1988) discussed business organizational conflict and conflict research. These authors referred to conflicts as disputes between individuals and groups. However, they did not identify the multiplicity of participants and stakeholders that Blumberg and Blumberg (1985) and Iles (1984) described.

The literature clearly indicates that conflicts in educational administration frequently involved numerous participants. When discussing conflict theory in business organizations, notable theorists such as Coser (1956), Deutsch (1973), and Thomas (1976) did not address the issue of multiple stakeholders. This omission leads to the conclusion that many conflict situations that occur in educational administration cannot be adequately explained by the theories broached in the general organizational literature. For example, those involving multiple community stakeholders.

Perceptions of Professional Role

Boyd (1989) employed open-ended interviews with teachers from five Alberta schools to collect data about their experiences with conflict. She identified two "umbrella" concepts of conflict types or causes of the conflict situations that occurred in her study. They were the idea of "it's unfair" or equity issues involving various aspects of a teacher's professional duties, and "professional ego" or conflict involving perceptions of professional role. Fris (1992a) also identified professional role perceptions as a source of conflict

among principals. Valentine (1988), in a case study of a hospital diploma nursing program, studied several conflicts between members of the teaching staff. Causes of these conflicts included professional autonomy concerns, for example, disagreements about evaluation procedures and a disagreement with a counsellor regarding instructor marking of assignments. The latter may be a "control" or a "personal integrity" issue. It is not possible to ascertain which from Valentine's description.

Professional role and equity issues also cause conflict in business, but they do not appear to occur as frequently or as intensely as they do in education. A possible explanation is that professionals in educational settings are much more numerous, the largest single group, and are more autonomous than in some business organizations. Boyd (1989) noted that professionals determine many aspects of their work loads and are responsible for volunteering to perform the "extra" duties involved in the role. They often perceive that some of their co-workers are not carrying their fair share of the "extras" and this leads to equity conflict issues.

Skolnik (1987), an Ontario educational researcher studying the political economy of higher education, identified a professional role conflict that can occur in the post-secondary educational system. Professors who conduct research in a sphere that has a direct impact on the public purse may find themselves in the position where they are recommending unwelcome changes to the system of which they are part--for example, recommending spending cuts to their programs or departments. Weisbord, et al. (1978) described the conflict that occurs when physicians in university medical centres must perform several different professional roles, for example, teacher, researcher, practising physician, and frequently, administrator. In the business organizational, literature the existence of these multiple professional roles is not as apparent.

Administrators' job descriptions are usually clear and their loyalties are not divided between opposing and equally important roles.

Summary

The information regarding the causes of conflict in educational settings is sparse (See Table 1, p. 9). However, it does indicate that there are significant differences between business and educational organizations. The role of numerous participants or stakeholders in educational settings, the frequency of episodes related to perceptions of professional role and affect, and the identification of attacks on personal integrity are important areas of difference that need further investigation and validation.

Types of Conflict

In the literature about conflict, discussions center around three basic types of conflict--interorganizational, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. These basic types may be further subdivided. For example, intragroup conflict involves conflict between members of a group, intradepartmental conflict may refer to disagreements between groups within one department of an organization, and there is said to be intraorganizational conflict when discord occurs between groups or departments within an organization.

Interorganizational Conflict

Educational organizations must deal with interorganizational conflict frequently. Deutsch (1973) stated "conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur" (p. 10). In educational settings this type of conflict is usually complex and involves multiple conflicting goals, expectations, values, and cultures. Iles' (1984) study of an interorganizational conflict between several school districts in Alberta indicates the complexity of such situations in educational organizations. He found that the situation involved not only several

TABLE 1
Summary of Causes of Conflict in Education Settings

	Numerous Participants	Affect	Attacks on Personal Integrity	Professional Role Perception
Blumberg & Blumberg (1988)	X			X
Boyd (1989)				X
Fris (1990)		X	X	X
Iles (1984)	X			
Skolnik (1987)				X
Weisbord et al. (1978)				X
Woodtli (1987)		X		
Valentine (1988)				X

X denotes mentioned by author

organizations but also multiple stakeholders, for example, boards, politicians, high-level civil servants, teachers, parents, community members, and religious organizations. Each organization and each group of stakeholders had its own goals, expectations, and agendas. Until intervention by a Minister of Education, they were constantly in an incompatible situation.

Interpersonal Conflict

Johns (1988) described interpersonal conflict as a "process of antagonism that occurs when one person or organizational subunit frustrates the goal attainment of another" (p. 443). A subunit may be either an individual or a group. Ogilvie (1988) stated that interpersonal conflict also occurs when an individual assumes the right to make decisions about the actions of others that will affect their individual lives. Interpersonal conflict in educational settings occurs frequently because of the "people orientation" of the organizations. Boyd (1989) and Valentine (1988) investigated conflicts involving instructional staff and all the situations their informants described were of an interpersonal nature. Woodtli (1987) examined perceived conflict sources among deans of university faculties of nursing who identified interpersonal conflicts as two of the three most disruptive types of conflict.

Intrapersonal Conflict

A number of authors (Cooze, 1989; Johns, 1988; Skolnik, 1987; Hartley & Pennington, 1975) discussed intrapersonal conflicts that occur because of ambiguous or conflicting role expectations. In educational settings, professional role conflict, a type of intrapersonal conflict, has been identified (for example, Boyd, 1989; Skolnik, 1987; Valentine, 1988; Weisbord, 1987). This type of conflict was addressed during the discussion regarding causes of conflict.

Summary

As may be seen from the preceding discussion, the types of conflict identified in the literature occurred in educational organizations. Interorganizational conflicts were usually complex and involved multiple stakeholders. Interpersonal conflicts were frequent. Intrapersonal conflicts, usually involving professional role, were found to be prevalent.

Conflict Management Strategies

Owens (1987) stated that the effective management of conflict that occurs within or between organizations "can lead to outcomes that are productive and enhance the health of the organization" (p. 247). Other authors concur (e.g., Hodgkinson, 1983; Hoy & Miskel, 1987). Therefore, selected literature sources related to the importance of conflict management, the strategies used by school administrators and teachers, and strategies used in post-secondary education were reviewed.

Importance of Conflict Management

While effective management of conflict situations can promote the health of the organization, "frequent and powerful conflict can have a devastating impact upon the behavior of people in organizations" (Owens, 1987, p. 247).

Dann (1987), Kimbrough and Nunnery (1988), Owens (1987), and Ray and Ray (1986) discussed the positive effects of functional or effectively managed organizational conflict. It can be a motivating factor that will stimulate creativity and enhance decision-making thus improving organizational effectiveness. Coser (1956) believed that when a society effectively managed conflicts it could adjust to changing conditions more readily. Effective conflict management leads to the creation of new or revised norms, thus assuring the society's "continuance under changed conditions" (P. 154).

Kimbrough and Nunnery (1988) and Owens (1987) stated that ineffective conflict management can lead to a situation where frustration increases, working relationships become adversarial, aggressive, and (frequently) hostile, the conflict situation worsens, and organizational effectiveness declines. "Get-tough" management practices and suppression of the conflict only exacerbate the situation according to these authors. Deutsch (1973) cautioned that when conflict is suppressed, warning signals about serious problems are masked. This can lead to eventual organizational breakdown.

Strategies Used by School Administrators

Five studies were found that examined conflict management techniques used by senior school administrators and two authors described the techniques used by principals.

Wirt and Christovich (1989) surveyed 131 American urban school executives. Thomas' (1976) contingency model of conflict management was then used to identify the conflict management styles used by the executives. These styles were described as competing, compromising, accommodating, and collaborating. The executives also mobilized group support and built coalitions when the conflict situation was dramatic and professional norms had been challenged. Wirt and Christovich (1989) also found that the management styles varied according to the circumstances surrounding the conflict. The authors also noted that evidence of the frequency of different types of conflict and which techniques the executives used to deal with each type is incomplete.

Loewen (1983) studied senior educational administrators, i.e., school superintendents in Saskatchewan, and identified their six most frequently used conflict management tactics. These tactics were information control, coalition formation, imposition of rules and regulations, information channels, stalling for time, and denigration. Withdrawal, appearing to lose, and control of reward

were also used but not as frequently. The tactic used depended upon who the conflict involved; for example, with teachers the senior administrators tended to use rules and regulations, and with the board they tended to form coalitions and stall for time. Loewen noted that all these tactics are of the win-lose variety. He offered several possible explanations for this phenomenon. First, the educational preparation of the superintendents and directors of education may not have been adequate in the area of conflict and conflict management. Second, the high profile of the administrators in the province did not allow them to be perceived as other than "winners". The third possible explanation Loewen put forth was that "the nature of the data required for this investigation might have precluded the respondents articulating anecdotes which were not of the win-lose variety" (p. 132).

In an American study, Zeigler, Kehoe and Reisman (1983) investigated the conflict management techniques of school superintendents and city managers in several locations. Their results differed from those of Loewen (1983). They found that school superintendents emphasized rational management, i.e., the use of win-win techniques involving participant problem-solving, when involved in conflictual situations.

In his study of conflict in schools, Fris (1992) interviewed 15 elementary and secondary principals in an urban, western Canadian school system. The categories of conflict management strategies they most frequently described were management of information, censure of unacceptable behaviour, and management of climate. Competing, compromising, and accommodating were also identified as strategies. However, Fris found that "the principals tended to treat the conflicts as problems to be solved collaboratively" suggesting a "win-win" approach (p. 17).

Similarly, Content (1986) studied the conflict management practices of 144 elementary and secondary school principals in six suburban California school districts. She found that the principals' preferred conflict-management strategies were compromising, collaborating, avoiding, accommodating, and forcing. Their most frequently used methods were compromising and collaborating.

The five studies reviewed show an inconsistent and conflicting pattern of information about the conflict-management strategies used by school administrators. Fris (1992) and Zeigler et al. (1983) found collaborative problem-solving to be the preferred strategy. Loewen's (1983) participants used win-lose tactics. Content (1986) identified compromising as a preferred technique while Wirt and Christovich (1989) discovered that management styles varied according to the circumstances surrounding the conflict. Loewen (1983) and Wirt and Christovich (1989) also found that the management strategy varied according to the source of the conflict.

Strategies Used by Teachers

Conflict in schools from the teachers' point of view was studied by two researchers, Boyd and Wynn. Boyd (1989) investigated conflict among elementary school teachers in a western Canadian province. Her informants described very complex, interpersonal conflicts they had been involved in. Strategies to manage these conflicts usually began with an attempt to open channels of communication and "out-and-out fights" were avoided as long as possible. Often the teachers interviewed by Boyd (1989) would "retreat" from the situation to avoid a fight. The female teachers frequently ended up feeling sorry for the male participants in the conflict situation, and frequently they would then try to accommodate the men. Constructive management techniques (clarification of feelings, empathetic listening, focussing on objectives and

similarities, discovering and evaluating alternatives) were successfully applied only where rapport already existed to some degree. Wynn (1983) found that the American teachers participating in his study preferred collaboration (problem-solving) techniques when dealing with a teacher-school board conflict.

Strategies Used in Post-Secondary Education

Conflict management behaviour in post-secondary education was addressed by several authors. Dill (1984), when reviewing the literature on research into administrative behaviour in colleges and universities, found only two studies that "directly addressed managerial mediation and disturbance handling behavior" (p. 80). Hobbs (1974) focused on management of academic disputes and found that they were muted or avoided whenever possible. Weisbord, et al. (1978), in their study of nine American academic medical centres, identified bargaining and smoothing over (diffusion) as the preferred methods of conflict management.

More recently the conflict management styles used by university administrators were investigated by two authors. Neff (1986) examined conflict management styles of administrators in the 12 Ohio State Universities. She found that the conflict management techniques used by the academic administrators in her study differed significantly from the styles used by the group of business and industrial managers that had been used to norm the survey instrument used in this study. She also found that women in academia use compromising as a conflict management technique significantly more often than men do when they encounter a conflict situation with their supervisors/superordinates.

Woodtli (1987) surveyed deans of university nursing faculties in the U.S., most of whom were women, and found they perceived that they used a variety of conflict management strategies. The "deans found that their use of conflict-

handling modes did not vary in response to the conflict source or the perceived conflict effect" (p. 274). Findings also indicated each dean had one predominant strategy and these strategies were significantly related to the size of the faculty. Deans responsible for faculties with under 20 instructional staff perceived that they used collaboration more frequently than did those responsible for more than 20 instructors. The types of strategies used and their overall frequency in descending order were identified as compromise, collaborate, avoid, accommodate, and compete. Woodtli (1987) also raised the question of whether gender may have had an influence on the deans' preferred management tactics as most deans of nursing are women. She did not draw any further conclusions but recommended further study in this area.

The survey instruments used by Neff (1986) and Woodtli (1987) to collect their data were developed and normed in business organizations. Neff employed the ROCI-II, Form A, developed by Rahim (1983, as cited in Neff) and Woodtli the Thomas-Kilman MODE instrument (1976, as cited in Woodtli).

In her case study of a predominantly female, hospital-based diploma school of nursing in Canada, Valentine (1988) explored the organizational conflict that occurred during the author's observations of faculty interactions in the school. Three management techniques were identified: avoidance (the instructors involved usually quit talking to each other), discussing it openly at meetings, and domination. Avoidance was most common. Discussing it openly at meetings appeared to be a diffusion tactic when the transcript of the discussion quoted by the author was examined. This tactic was employed occasionally. Data from interviews with selected faculty also indicated that social events were often used in an attempt to diffuse conflict. Domination was observed once by the researcher. This occurred when a number of instructors formed an alliance to force closure on a conflict brought about by a suggestion

from the school guidance counsellor. Valentine (1988) stated that gender may have been a factor in the way conflict was managed in this educational organization.

Valentine (1988) also briefly discussed the effectiveness of the management strategies used. She concluded that open discussion at meetings resulted in satisfactory solutions to conflict episodes. However, avoidance left the conflicts unresolved. The use of social events as a diffusion tactic was also "not very successful" (Valentine, 1988, p. 163). The domination technique forced closure on discussion regarding the episode but the conflict continued to exist.

Summary

Several authors stressed the importance of effective conflict management for organizations. Research into strategies used in educational administration has identified numerous techniques that administrators have employed (see Table 2, p. 18). However, an inconsistent and conflicting pattern is evident in both the K-12 and post-secondary educational administration literature. Differences in management styles were found between educational and business settings but no clear picture emerged. There is some indication that the strategy used depended upon the source/type of conflict (Loewen, 1983; Neff, 1986; Wirt & Christovich, 1989) but the relationships identified were weak and the picture unclear. Different research methodologies were employed. Some studies used self-report, a priori models while others were "grounded". A number of the studies used data-collecting instruments normed in industry. It also must be noted that the effectiveness of the strategies was addressed by only two authors (Boyd, 1989; Valentine, 1988).

TABLE 2
Conflict Management Strategies Used in Education Settings

	Compete/Dominate*	Compromise*	Accommodate*	Collaborate*	Avoid*	Other
Boyd (1989)			X		X	Retreat, Communicate
Content (1986)	X Forcing	X	X	X	X	
Fris (1992)	X	X	X	X	X	Censure, manage climate and information
Hobbs (1974)					X	Avoiding
Loewen (1983)					X	Win-Lose
Neff (1986)					X	
Weisbord et al. (1978)		X Bargain			X	Smoothing over
Wirt & Christovich (1989)	X	X	X	X		Group Support Coalitions
Woodtli (1987)	X	X	X	X	X	Avoiding
Wynn (1983)				X		
Valentine (1988)	X				X	Avoiding, diffusion
Zeigler (1983)					X	Win-win

X denotes mentioned by author
*** strategies by Thomas (1976)**

Influencing Factors

There is little information in the literature regarding factors that influence the course of conflict situations and their management. However, the principals interviewed by Fris (1990) identified a number of categories of contingent factors, the most common of which were historical circumstances, personal traits, and access to information. Influencing factors, and their role in conflict situations, were not directly discussed in other sources examined for this review.

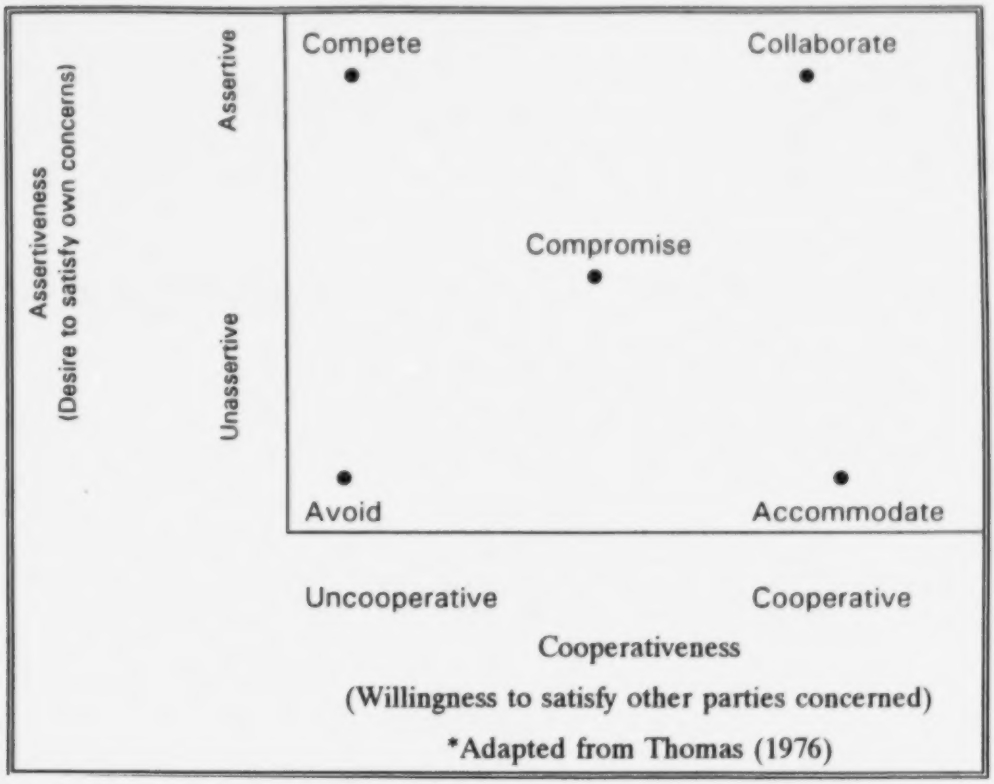
A Contingency Approach to Conflict Management

The basis for the contingency approach to conflict management can be found in the ideas of Mary Parker Follet. She started writing about organizational theory during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Follet identified three ways that administrators could choose to manage conflict. They could exercise power, seek a compromise, or "bring the conflict into the open and [seek] a mutually acceptable, win-win resolution" (Owens, 1987, p. 11).

Owens (1987) also discussed a contingency approach to conflict management that was developed by Thomas (1976). Thomas stated that two factors are important in the perception of a conflict situation: the parties' willingness to cooperate and their desire to satisfy their own concerns. Cooperativeness and assertiveness are the two critical behaviours indicative of these factors. A two-dimensional model developed by Thomas (1976), (Figure 1, p. 20), places these behaviours on continua representing the perception of the conflict episode by the parties involved. Thomas (1976) identified the management strategies associated with these perceptions and then classified them on the continua.

Figure 1

Contigency Model of Conflict Management Strategies*



These strategies are as follows:

1. Avoid--withdrawal from the situation, leaving the conflict situation not dealt with.

2. Accommodate--one party in the conflict gives in to the other, frequently at the sacrifice of his/her own concerns.

3. Compete--assertively satisfy personal concerns without regard for the concerns of others.

4. Compromise--recognizes that the parties involved in the conflict are adversaries who agree to solutions that involve "splitting the difference."

5. Collaborate--a problem-solving approach to conflict that results in a solution that integrates the concerns of both parties.

The Thomas (1976) model of conflict and conflict management is frequently cited in the educational administration literature regarding conflict (Content, 1986; Cooze, 1990; Owens, 1987; Woodtli, 1987). However, it is important to note that this model was developed from data collected in business organizations. Fris (1992) suggested that the model is "robust" in educational settings; however, he qualified this by stating that "the findings may have been influenced by such factors as the participants electing to describe 'safe' or flattering incidents" (pp. 19-20). No further evidence was found that the model has been validated for use in educational settings. Table 2, page 18 summarizes identification of Thomas's conflict management strategies in the educational literature reviewed. It can be noted from the table that there is some evidence to support the robustness of the model in educational settings. However, significant differences between the strategies identified by Thomas and those utilized by educational administrators have been identified.

Summary

Selected literature sources addressing conflict in educational organizations, techniques used to manage it, and the role of contingent factors in a conflict situation have been reviewed. In the area of influencing or contingent factors, only one study addressed this area and identified factors that were present.

Discussions of the sources of conflict in educational settings indicate that they correspond closely with the those identified in general conflict theory; however, some important differences have been identified. These include the large number of participants, the frequency of conflicts related to perceptions of professional role and affect, and the presence of other causes, such as attacks on personal integrity (Table 3, p. 22).

TABLE 3
Summary of the Literature on Conflict Causes, and Management Strategies**

	Business/Industry	Education
Causes:	- competition for scarce resources* - conflicting resources* - policies* - practices* - equity* - autonomy - intrapersonal role - affect - professional role	- numerous participants/ stakeholders* - affect* - professional role* - professional autonomy* - equity* - attacks on personal integrity - intrapersonal role
Strategies:	- collaborate - accommodate - compromise/bargain - avoid - compete/force/dominate	- manage information - censure unacceptable behaviour - manage climate - participant problem solving/ collaborate - accommodate - compromise/bargain - compete/dominate - avoid - diffuse - coalition formation - stall for time - denigrate - clarification of feelings - sympathetic listening - focusing on objectives

This summary is not intended to be exhaustive and lists only the most commonly mentioned items.

**The business strategies were adapted from Thomas (1976).

* Denotes most frequently mentioned.

The three main types of conflict; interorganizational, interpersonal, and intrapersonal occurred in educational organizations. Interorganizational conflicts were found to be complex, involving multiple stakeholders. Interpersonal conflicts, which may be disagreements between individuals or groups, were frequent. Intrapersonal conflicts identified in the educational administration literature revolved around aspects of professional role.

Results of studies that looked at the conflict management strategies employed by educational administrators present a confusing picture (see Table 2, p. 18). Strategies identified in the business organizational literature are used in educational settings; however, other management strategies have also been described. Preferred strategies are identified but there is little discussion of their effectiveness. Several studies indicated that the strategy used varied with the circumstances surrounding the conflict; however, several did not. Researchers have frequently used the Thomas (1976) model but only one study reported any attempt to validate its application to educational settings.

Previous research into conflict management strategies used by post-secondary educational administrators is sparse and two of the five studies reviewed used survey instruments normed in industry. The relevance of these studies for educational settings could therefore be questioned. Only two authors discussed indices of effectiveness of the management strategies. Also, in two of the studies, most of the participants were women. Neff (1986), Valentine (1988), and Woodtli (1987) suggested that gender may play a role in the way administrators handle conflict. However, the results of the post-secondary educational research reviewed are conflicting and inconclusive.

The picture of conflict in educational settings that is presented by research conducted to date is unclear. The findings are conflicting and

contradictory, the methodologies used are inconsistent, and the role of gender in conflict situations has not been adequately investigated (only two studies addressed gender directly). Also, little practical information is available to assist the administrator in understanding and managing conflict in educational settings. These concerns indicate the need for further research into the nature of conflict in educational settings.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

Concerns Generated by the Literature

This study was designed to examine the nature of conflicts encountered by nursing educational administrators. The impetus stemmed from the following concerns. The literature suggested that while much of general conflict theory can be applied to educational settings, significant differences in sources of conflict and management strategies exist (see Table 3, p. 22). Other concerns raised by the literature indicated areas where further research was necessary. These included the inconsistent and confusing picture presented in the research to date, the lack of validation of the Thomas model for use in educational settings, the lack of information regarding factors that influence conflict, the use of data-collecting instruments normed in business organizations, and the limited reference to the gender of the protagonists in a conflict as a possible variable.

Methodology

The study used a "constructivist" research methodology to gather data from post-secondary educational administrators regarding the nature of conflicts they had encountered. Grounded theory techniques (Strauss, 1987) were employed to guide data collection and analysis. Strauss and Corbin (1990) defined a grounded theory as "one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents" (p. 23). It was hoped this research design would permit the identification of propositions or hypotheses describing the conflicts in nursing educational settings.

Guba and Lincoln (1989) have identified a "constructivist" research methodology as one that is based on multiple, mental, and social constructions of reality. Hermeneutic and dialectic methods are employed, allowing the

researcher to attempt to come to a conclusion regarding the theoretical concepts emerging from the constructed realities of the participants in the study. A grounded theory approach facilitates identification of these realities, and subsequent comparisons with previously formulated theoretical concepts or models. Glaser and Strauss (1967) stated that theoretical concepts generated from the initial evidence can then be validated against further comparative data; this is attempted in the last chapter of this report.

Data Collection

Data were collected using minimally structured interviews with selected nursing educational administrators. Each informant was asked to reflect on two conflict episodes, one that had a satisfactory outcome and one that did not. One informant reflected on four episodes, two that had satisfactory conclusions and two that she perceived had unsatisfactory outcomes. The criterion for satisfaction was the informant's opinion as an administrator. As the informants reflected on the episodes they were guided to reconstruct their reality of them, to tell their own story.

Demographic data about the informants and the programs that they administered were collected at the beginning of the interviews in a structured exchange that took approximately five minutes. This procedure was decided upon after preliminary test use of a pencil and paper format. The two administrators who completed the written questionnaire suggested that it took more than five minutes and that it was difficult to separate the proportions of time spent on their professional practice, teaching, and administrative roles. They recommended that a brief discussion take place regarding the participants' career paths. This would allow the interviewer to ask the participant questions like how much of your time was spent in actual professional practice while you were an administrator? What did this professional practice involve?

The interviews were audio-tape recorded and transcribed onto a computer disc as soon as possible after the interview had been completed. Field notes were kept to record non-verbal cues to the conflict situations.

A transcript of the interview and an outline of the initial data analysis were forwarded to the informant two to three weeks before a second interview was scheduled. The informant was asked to verify that the transcript was an accurate record of what they had said. They were also asked if the concepts and constructs identified during the initial analysis of the interview accurately represented what they perceived about the conflict situations. The second interview allowed for clarification and/or elaboration of points discussed in the first interview. This procedure constituted Round I of the data collection.

Following Round I a second set of interviews was conducted with different informants. After the Round II informants had reflected upon conflict episodes they had experienced they were asked if they could authenticate the concepts and categories of phenomena that had so far emerged from the previously collected data. This was done as a measure of trustworthiness (transferability) and to obtain data for further comparative analysis. Verification of the accuracy of transcripts and discussion of findings from initial data analysis in this round were similar to that conducted in round one.

The interviews for the study were conducted either in person or by means of audio-tape recorded telephone conversations. Thirteen interviews were conducted in person and five were recorded telephone interviews. During the face-to-face interviews it was possible to observe such non-verbal cues as body language. During the recorded telephone interviews it was necessary to rely on the tone, pitch, and volume of the informants' voices for the non-verbal cues.

Data Sources

The administrators chosen to participate in the study were selected from administrators who have major program responsibility for Canadian community college and university nursing educational programs. Twenty-four such administrators from across Canada were contacted by mail to ascertain if they were interested in participating in the study. Ten administrators volunteered to be informants. One had to withdraw from the study because of a scheduling conflict. Six of the volunteers, three from college programs and three from university programs, were selected for the first round of interviews. For the second round three administrators were selected, two from university nursing programs and one from a college program. Two audio-tape recorded interviews were conducted with each of the informants.

Data Analysis

The transcribed interviews were subjected to analysis using a grounded theory approach. The research questions provided a focus for the analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Strauss and Corbin (1990) stated that grounded theory analysis involves "making comparisons, . . . [and] asking questions" to identify and name the concepts that represent phenomena occurring in the data (p. 62). "Concepts that seem to pertain to the same phenomena" are grouped together into categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 65). The analysis was also guided by the questions "Who? When? Where? What? How? How much? and Why?" about the properties of the concepts and categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 77). Asking these questions helped the researcher to direct more precise questions to the informants in the second round of interviews and to the information contained in the literature. The data collected in the second round of interviews also allowed for comparative analysis with the concepts and categories identified in the first round.

Data were coded using Strauss and Corbin's (1990) open coding technique. Discrete incidents and ideas contained in sentences, paragraphs, and stories were analyzed and compared to other incidents. They were then given a label to represent the concept. For example, an informant stated that a "faculty member told the student she should take the child [she was caring for] as a foster child." This statement contained a discrete idea regarding an instructor's direction to a student. Careful scrutiny revealed that it was inappropriate advice to give a student and the instructor's expertise could be questioned. Therefore the concept was labelled "lack of expertise."

A word processing program was used to list the coded concepts and the elements of the transcripts that related to them. These lists were filed according to interview. After further data analysis they were filed according to category. The concepts were tracked by labelling each one with the interview and page from which it came.

The demographic data were also analyzed and summarized, providing descriptive information about the participants and the programs that they administered. When results were compared and analyzed on a matrix with the sources of conflict and the management strategies these data did not prove useful. They were not utilized further.

Trustworthiness

The measures of trustworthiness identified by Guba and Lincoln (1982, 1989) were used in this study. As the study proceeded credibility was assessed by asking the respondents if the data collected and analyzed fairly represented what they had to say. Dependability or stability of the study was ensured by an outside audit of the methodological steps and decision points involved in the data-handling process. This was conducted by a researcher in the Department of Educational Administration. Confirmability was addressed by the use of a

reflective journal during all phases of the study and by verifying each finding of the study with an audit through the steps of the analysis.

Transferability of the findings of this study "is an empirical matter depending on the degree of similarity between sending and receiving contexts" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 297). The descriptions of the settings in which the conflicts occurred (See Appendix A) should help the reader in making transferability decisions.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted to investigate the following areas:

1. the willingness of administrators to participate in the study,
2. the effectiveness of the interview questions,
3. the interview technique,
4. the type of data that are obtained by asking the participants to reflect on two conflicts--i.e., is the data rich enough for identification of categories with sufficient conceptual power to allow for theorizing, and
5. whether the informants described only safe or sensational incidents.

The administrators who took part in the pilot study were selected from organizations not participating in the main study. Information obtained from them indicated that sufficient participants would be available for the study. The administrators were interviewed using the interview questions and the minimally structured interview technique. Assessment of the data obtained indicated that it would be of sufficient richness and thickness to allow for theorizing. There was no indication that the study questions would result in informants describing method bound critical incidents.

The pilot study also provided an opportunity for the researcher to begin to train herself in the use of a constructivist approach and grounded theory analysis.

Delimitations and Limitations

This study was delimited to administrators of two types of post-secondary educational programs in Canadian universities and colleges. One level of administrator and two types of institutions were utilized. Data collection took place over a period of eight months.

One limitation on the study is that semi-structured interviews were the only data collection method used. No observation of the conflicts was possible. Peer debriefing was also limited because only one researcher was involved in the study. These factors could have affected the credibility of the study. Another limitation of the study was the restricted transferability of the results due to the use of only post-secondary educational institutions, and one level of administrator in two types of programs.

Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was sought from the participants and they were asked to sign a written consent for participation in the study. They were informed that their participation was voluntary and that all responses would remain confidential. Although quotations from interviews are used in this report, the sources remain anonymous. Any identifying comments in the quotations were deleted or disguised. Participants were identified as nursing educational administrators with major program responsibilities in Canadian universities and community colleges. The researcher was the only individual who had access to the names of the participants. Participants were also informed they could withdraw from the study at any time, and could request to have any portion or all of the interview transcript deleted and destroyed. They were also informed that the raw data would be secured in the Department of Educational Administration archives for five years following completion of the study and then destroyed.

The data will be accessible from the archives only with authorization of the researcher.

Permission to conduct the study was sought through the ethical review process of the Department of Educational Administration. Approval was granted.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The nursing educational administrators who participated in the study described conflicts they felt had been successfully handled and ones that were not. As they told their stories the tone of their voices and their body language indicated that they had strong emotional feelings related to the conflicts. They were pleased, excited, angry, and frustrated. Although the administrators were asked to relate two conflict episodes, one administrator told four stories. Also, many of the stories described very complex situations involving several conflicts. For example, when discussing a student who was failing the informant revealed that the problem had been long standing. She related numerous incidents that had involved the student, nursing instructors, instructors from other departments, counsellors, administrators, colleagues in practica sites, and other students. Summaries of the situations described by the informants are provided in Appendix A.

The grounded theory analysis of these stories revealed a number of interesting concepts and categories related to the nature of conflicts encountered in nursing educational administration in colleges and universities. They included manifestations of the conflicts, sources, factors that influenced the conflicts, management strategies, effectiveness of the strategies, and outcomes of the conflicts.

There were negative aspects of the conflicts and the administrators discussed these in detail. The process of telling the stories appeared to be a catharsis for them. However, there were numerous positive aspects of the situations. The informants acknowledged the positive aspects and their behaviour supported it. One individual was almost jumping up and down on her

seat as she described a situation that had been successfully managed with several creatively developed strategies.

Manifestations of Conflict

The informants described a variety of manifestations of conflict. For example, one group of students were "in a state about their marks. Out of 15 students in the class we had 13 who wanted to appeal their grade and this was highly unusual. . . . The whole group was really distraught." Complaints and concerns were part of each situation described by the informants in both rounds of the study. They ranged from instructor complaints about students and about each other to concerns expressed, by a wide variety of stakeholders, regarding the behaviour of instructors, students, and administrators. Threats were also uttered. Illustrations included threats by instructors to go to the union and to assist students appeal their grades. Student threats involved "going to get" peers or instructors. Puzzlement was part of a number of the incidents. For example, an administrator stated that she could not understand why an instructor was in post-secondary education because she did not appear to respect students. In another situation several instructors could not understand why their colleagues did not seek their assistance. Numerous affective manifestations of conflict were identified in this study, for example, anger, frustration, and "feeling dumped on." Table 4, page 35 provides a complete list of these affective manifestations.

Sources of Conflict

Seven sources of conflict were identified from the data provided in the stories told by the informants. Five of the sources occurred frequently and were defined by numerous properties. The other two sources were mentioned briefly; however, informants non-verbal cues indicated they considered them to have substance and worth mention. The informant's body language and tone of

TABLE 4
Affective Manifestations of Conflict
Described by Nursing Educational Administrators

Anger
Frustration
"Feeling dumped on"
Defensive
Making excuses
Feeling badly about self
Surprise
Lack of mutual understanding
Agitation
Shouting matches
Pity
Empathy
"Egg on my face"
"Hung out to dry"
Powerlessness
"Feeling betrayed"
Unhappy
Making derogatory remarks

voice as they described conflicts that involved the five major sources of discord indicated that they felt strongly about the issues involved.

Concern for Students

An important issue in the conflicts described in this study was the administrators' concern for students. Twelve of the 20 situations described by the informants involved this source of conflict. Webster's (1977) dictionary defines concern as "an uneasy state of blended interest, uncertainty, and apprehension" (p. 233). The concern for students that emerged was an uneasy state and it encompassed uncertainty and apprehension. The interest was implicit in all the administrators' stories. For example, an administrator stated "we had this whole group of students that was really distraught and we, the dean and I, felt that we had to do something. . . . More students would have been at risk and it would have been a much more difficult situation."

Three primary concerns ran through the interviews. They related to quality of the education students received, students' psychological safety, and the quality of students' academic and professional performance. The findings related to concern for students as a source of conflict are summarized in Table 5, page 37 and described below.

Quality of education. Part of the concern for students involved the quality of the education they were receiving. Faculty members' instructional behaviour was an important component of educational quality. Nursing educational administrators were concerned about instructors' level of expertise and their ability to perceive their own problems. Ethical and moral principles related to equity, respect, and students' privacy were also identified as critical elements.

TABLE 5
Concern for Students
Exhibited by Nursing Educational Administators

QUALITY OF EDUCATION
- Instructional behaviour
  - Lack of expertise
    - Inappropriate course content
    - Being a poor role model
    - Difficulties with clinical practice
  - Inability to perceive own problems
- Unethical Behaviour
  - Equity/fairness issues
  - Lack of respect for students
  - Invasion of students' privacy

STUDENTS' PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY
- Instructor Behaviour*
  - Inflexible
  - Intimidation
  - Manipulation
  - Need to control
  - Psychological abuse (use of emotional battery)

QUALITY OF STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE
- Unsafe performance
  - Use of mind-altering substance
  - Failing to complete assigned tasks
  - Incorrect perceptions of role
- Unethical Behaviour
  - Invasion of patient's privacy
  - Lying
  - Slandering instructors in public
  - Patient safety

*These are personal attributes or part of an individual's affect.

Instructors were judged on their instructional behaviour. A faculty selection committee recommended a candidate for a continuing position on the basis of instructional expertise and the administrator stated she perceived that this candidate would "be a very fine teacher." Other administrators discussed conflicts that revolved around instructor's who lacked expertise.

Lack of expertise or knowledge occurred frequently and included such areas as inappropriate course content selected by the instructor, being a poor role model, and difficulties with clinical practice. One informant described the inappropriate course content selected by an instructor. Students were assigned

> a wide variety of literature to read. It was very difficult to make any connection with nursing. They were kind of classical pieces in a sense, and I think there may have been some point, and the students found them interesting but had terrific difficulty trying to relate them to anything.

Being a poor role model, part of this lack of expertise, was described thus by an administrator: "Students say that this instructor does everything that she says you shouldn't do. They see her as just a terrible role model for what she's talking about. And this is really problematic." Difficulties with clinical practice involved inappropriate behaviour in a practice setting and unsafe clinical judgements relating to patient care. For example, one instructor suggested a student should "take the child she was working with as a foster child."

The inability to perceive one's own problems was a factor that appeared frequently in the conflicts described by the informants. They found this behaviour frustrating because it prevented instructors from addressing problems that were affecting student performance. A striking example is the instructor with multiple problems resulting in behaviours that were "very damaging to students". She had been referred to academic counsellors several times; however, she continued to exhibit the same unacceptable behaviours. The administrator stated that

> she is completely unaware of the effect she has on people. I have tried to point out some of these situations but it is very difficult to do this with her. . . . I have tried to be a facilitator and it doesn't go anywhere. . . . When students start dropping out of her course she states it is just the ones who are failing anyway. And that is not true.

The important role that ethics and values play in educational quality was stressed by all the administrators. When different emphases were placed on ethics and values by different people conflict ensued. The following situation involves an equity or fairness issue and demonstrates this. The senior administrator of an educational organization supported students who challenged a program's progression criteria. The students were required to pass one particular unit of a nursing course, pharmacology mathematics. If they failed this unit they were not allowed to continue in the program. The administrator and instructors in the program stated that this criterion was in place to ensure patient safety when the students were administering medications. The senior administrator maintained that this criterion was unfair because it meant that students failed an entire program on the basis of only one component of a course. The senior administrator valued fairness to students while the nursing faculty were more concerned with patient safety.

The informants stated that their educational organizations valued students. For example, an administrator stated that the Vice-President Academic of her organization had publicly stated that the organization was there for the students. This administrator, and several others, were concerned when instructors' behaviors indicated a lack of respect for students. A behavior that exemplified this was described as follows:

> This instructor constantly tells administration how terrible the students are; they can't write, they can't think, they can't analyze, they can't do anything that satisfies her. They are the worst ever.

Students have a right to their privacy. Their private and professional lives are not the concern of the educational organization or its faculty. Instructors

invaded students' privacy when they asked students probing questions about their personal lives and then used this information when complaining about them to the administrator. Student's privacy was also invaded when an instructor went to a student's work place and called her out of a meeting.

Students' psychological safety. A second part of the concern for students revolved around their psychological safety. The administrators described instances where instructors were inflexible, where they manipulated and intimidated students and needed to control them. Instances of psychological abuse or the use of "emotional battery" were also identified.

Lack of flexibility included such areas as failure to consider the needs of students. It was described thus:

> There's no flexibility with what the students want, with their clinical placements. There's no flexibility if there's a problem. It just never enters her mind that you could do a variety of things to solve students' problems that are well within the rules. It's like its a whole new thought. There's this lack of willingness to look at anything as a solution.

Students were manipulated by an instructor (in a department other than nursing) to complain and cause trouble for their instructors and administrator with the senior administrators of the organization. Instructors intimidated and controlled students by keeping photocopies of everything that students handed in, telling them they were terrible, and terrifying them to the point where they "think even circling a number on a computer scored evaluation form will be traced back to them." An example of psychological abuse involved degrading the good students in a class. A second example was the story about an instructor who used to use a form of emotional battery with her students. In the clinical area she would be very critical of a student's performance and

> would mortify the student in front of the patient, and then when the student would come to her office later on to talk about it, she would say to the student, "gosh, you did a great job today, you just did a wonderful job today."

Quality of Students' performance. An additional factor involved in concern for students, and that led to conflict, was their unsafe and unethical performance. During practica, a student's performance was considered unsafe when it involved the use of a mind altering substance, failing to complete assigned tasks, and incorrectly perceiving the requirements of the role. Administrators stated they had been asked to remove students from practica because of these factors. For example, a student caused problems at a community agency by being disruptive and interfering with prescribed treatment programs. The agency requested her removal.

Unethical student behaviour involved invading patients' privacy, slandering instructors in public, and lying. A student who was reported to have invaded patients' right to privacy when she took information from patients' records. She then phoned the patients at home and harassed them. An example of lying, or dishonesty, occurred when a student stated that she was unable to come to her required clinical practicum because her child was ill. A faculty member happened to see the student pick her daughter up from the day care late in the afternoon of that day. "So, we phoned the day care and found that she had dropped her daughter off early that morning and that the child was not sick."

Patient safety was a theme that ran through the whole area of quality of student performance. Students' performance was judged unsafe by instructors, administrators, and practica site personnel when it affected patient safety. A previously cited example indicated that a student was asked to leave a practicum site because her performance was "interfering with prescribed treatment programs" thus compromising patient safety. A second example described by an administrator involved a student who had come to a practicum

experience under the influence of a mind altering substance and was asked to leave the site.

Summary. The findings of this study reveal that the nursing educational administrators were very concerned for students and this frequently emerged as a source of conflict. Components of this concern involved the quality of education the students received, their psychological safety, and their performance. An important aspect of the quality of students' performance was the safety of the patients they cared for during practica.

Diffuse Power Structure

Hersey and Blanchard (1988) stated that power is "influence potential--the resource that enables a leader to gain compliance or commitment from others" (p. 202). John's (1988) noted that legitimate power is "derived from a person's position or job in the organization" (p. 427). Sharing of the legitimate influence needed to gain compliance was an important source of the conflicts encountered by nursing educational administrators.

The informants' stories revealed that the power and decision making structures of the organizations they were part of were diffuse, with legitimate power being shared by multiple individuals and groups. Informants perceived themselves as part of collegial processes and stated their belief in and support of these processes. Informants also indicated that at times "it would be helpful to be autocratic", to be able to unilaterally make a decision and have the legitimate power and authority to enforce it. A graphic example of this was the case of an instructor who was psychologically damaging students. The administrator wanted to remove her immediately but realized that it would take at least one year to gather the documentation needed under the tenure and committee system of the organization.

Decision making via committee, the backbone of the collegial form of shared formal power was described as a lengthy process that was utilized to select new faculty members, decide who would be granted tenure or an educational leave, and hear student and faculty appeals. In fact almost all the decisions of the organizations were made in this manner. This situation was described succinctly by an administrator who stated that "it is largely the faculty who make the decisions. I am responsible for providing input into these decisions and for implementing them if they are feasible, reasonable."

The administrators expressed concerns related to shared formal power. They found that it was often inappropriately or ineffectively used. A situation involving inappropriate use of shared power occurred when a senior administrator of the organization requested that a departmental procedure be circumvented. A student who had failed to meet academic requirements and had been required to withdraw from a nursing program came to the senior administrator for assistance. The senior administrator asked the informant to "give this student another chance." She was concerned because nursing departmental procedures for considering re-enrollment of students who had failed had been circumvented.

Another aspect of shared formal power that presented problems for the administrators was being responsible without having formal authority. Webster's (1977) dictionary defined responsibility as being called on to answer or account for a cause or agent. The informants stated they were being held responsible for the actions of the decision making committees in their departments. However, they frequently faced obstructions to carrying out these responsibilities. An example of the frustration they felt was expressed as follows:

> that balance between faculty self-governance and administration, and how much one can get one's hands totally tied by a system. . . . I value it and I think its great on paper but I'm not too happy about the way the administrators often become the bad guys when we try to get things done.

The role of the union also was an area that concerned the administrators. They perceived the academic staff associations, or unions, were more concerned with rules and regulations and individuals than with the values of the academic organization. An informant described "interference" of the union in a tenure review process. She stated that the union became involved when the process was still at the departmental level whereas they should have waited until completion of the process. At that time the faculty member could have gone to the union and appealed the decision. Instead the union "called the senior academic officer and complained that I was not using the collective agreement properly."

Ethical issues related to the diffuse power structure of academic organizations involved equity and objectivity. Administrators were concerned that committees such as those who heard student and faculty appeals did not objectively consider the evidence. Equity issues revolved around instructional time and leave arrangements. For example, concern was expressed that an instructor was using instructional time to pursue graduate study.

The diffuse power structure of academic organizations can be a source of conflict for nursing educational administrators. They stated that they valued shared decision making but that the lengthy system of decision making by committee was frequently frustrating. Administrators also had concerns about their lack of formal authority in relation to areas that they were held responsible for. Other contentious areas included the role of unions or academic staff associations and ethical issues related to equity and objectivity.

Professional Status of Nursing

The discipline of nursing is relatively new to colleges and universities. It is also new to the concept of faculty self-governance and shared decision making. One informant described the point of view of a management consultant who maintained that "if you have faculty self-governance you have to have a fairly mature faculty to make it work well." The consultant's description of a mature faculty was "one that really gets on, works together, trusts each other a lot."

A second informant compared nursing as an academic discipline with "older" disciplines such as the arts and sciences. These disciplines have been in colleges and universities for hundreds of years whereas nursing has been part of academe less than a century. Faculty in the older disciplines come to academic organizations with doctoral degrees and post doctoral preparation, established experts in their fields. Nurses, on the other hand, frequently have minimal graduate educational qualifications and their expertise is in professional practice.

A theme that emerged from the stories of the nursing educational administrators participating in this study was that nursing is an evolving professional discipline. Faculty members continue to exhibit behaviours indicative of immaturity, for example, lack of trust in colleagues, unclear role expectations, and a need for further graduate study.

Lack of trust in colleagues. A source of conflict for nursing educational administrators was colleagues' lack of trust in each other. They had difficulty asking for assistance, admitting inability to complete tasks, and sharing their concerns outside of the group. For example, a faculty working group was developing a proposal for a new program. They were having difficulty with it but would not ask assistance from colleagues who had expertise in this area. Another example of lack of trust involved a group of instructors who were new to

teaching. Experienced faculty had frequently offered assistance; however, the inexperienced instructors did not avail themselves of the offered help. Six months later they were in difficulties and a serious conflict erupted. It would appear that this lack of trust can lead to a lack of group cohesiveness.

Unclear role expectations. The expectations of the role faculty need to play when an academic organization has shared governance were unclear to many faculty. This factor led to conflict. Because instructors had not been adequately prepared for the role, they did not adhere to the process or support it. A situation involving several new instructors exemplifies this theme clearly. The instructors had come to the academic organization from a highly bureaucratic system therefore had difficulty adjusting to the collegial environment. The administrator described the situation as follows.

> They had worked in hospitals dealing with a certain hierarchy. They couldn't make the adjustment to the role of an instructor. I remember one of them commented on the fact that she had an office and a filing cabinet and she didn't know what to do with it. They had nine-to-five-type jobs and I think for them the adjustment was really very difficult.

These instructors were not prepared for the collegial role and they did not adhere to it. They formed a clique and did not interact with other colleagues in the department. It would appear that they could not support the role because they resigned their positions after one year.

Need for further graduate education. Many nursing faculty were struggling to increase their graduate education. They were studying part-time, taking sabbaticals, and frequently forced to take unpaid leave to pursue master's and doctoral qualifications. These efforts were a factor in several of the situations described by the informants. Conflicts arose when sabbatical leaves were not granted, when it was perceived that paid leave arrangements were not "fair", and when prospective faculty did not have the required graduate qualifications.

Summary. As members of an evolving professional discipline, nursing educational administrators face problems that administrators in older, more established, academic disciplines do not. Colleagues may lack trust in each other, their role expectations may be unclear, and there is a need for many instructors to acquire further graduate qualification. These factors were frequently sources of the conflicts with which the informants in this study had to deal.

Information Problems

Problems relating to information were a common source of conflict in the situations described by the informants. A number of the informants discussed the need for accurate information when addressing the conflicts they encountered. If it became necessary to dismiss a faculty member or discontinue a student comprehensive, accurate information was necessary. Written documentation was preferable. When appropriate data were unavailable action could not be undertaken, or if taken appeals were frequently successful and the problem person continued to be present. Two types of information problems were identified from the stories of the informants. These problems related to quality of information and to flow of information. The types of problems and their numerous properties are summarized in Table 6, page 48.

Problems relating to quality of information. An important factor in conflicts involving information problems was the quality of the information available to administrators. Information quality was related to the areas of adequacy and perfection. Subterfuge and distortion of information were also identified as sources of conflict.

Inadequate information was described by one respondent in this way. She stated that an instructor had told her that she had "agreements to have these months of leave with pay so that she could be away in June and July to

TABLE 6
Information Problems Identified by Nursing Educational Administrators

PROBLEMS RELATED TO QUALITY OF INFORMATION

Inadequate Information

- Lack of information
- Incomplete information
- Written documentation required
- Unclear policies and procedures
- Short notice of policy changes
- Written communication inadequate

Imperfect Information

- Inaccurate information
- Written documentation does not reflect verbal feedback
- Misperceptions of a person or a situation
- Lack of written records
- Conflicting information

Subterfuge

- Formation of cliques
- Discussing concerns among selves
- Not making concerns known outside clique

PROBLEMS RELATED TO FLOW OF INFORMATION

Ineffective Communication Skills

- Not listening
- Not hearing
- Inability to express feelings
- Inability to provide specifics regarding problem
- Submitting requests at the last minute
- Lack of attention to detail
- Avoid face-to-face confrontation
- Anger blocking communications

pursue graduate study. . . . I checked on her file and could find no such agreement." A second respondent related the problem of not being provided with assistance in the form of the information needed to act in a correct manner.

Lack of written documentation was another area where administrators found they had inadequate information and this proved to be a source of conflict. Two informants described situations where there was a lack of written documentation about unsatisfactory student and instructor behaviour. One participant stated that she

> tried to get them (students) to document, as a group, the behaviours and the concerns they had and to give them to me. Not a peep out of them. . . . We keep saying if we don't have any documentation we can't do anything about it. We know this problem exists, its been going on for a number of years.

Imperfect or faulty information was another aspect of information problems. This area included an example where the written documentation did not reflect the verbal feedback. Students were giving an instructor satisfactory evaluations at the end of courses; yet they were coming to the administrator with complaints of the serious problems they were having with this instructor. In another situation students were misperceiving an instructor's behaviour. They were "taking incidents out of context, or they were blowing them up out of proportion, when evaluating instructors."

Subterfuge is defined by Webster's (1977) dictionary as "deception by artifice or stratagem in order to conceal, escape, or evade" (p. 1162). This type of information problem emerged as a frequent source of conflict. The following illustration, described by an informant, supports Webster's definition. One group of instructors formed a clique and discussed their concerns among themselves. They did not share these concerns outside the clique. Other faculty members and the administrator were unaware of the problems and therefore could not address them before they became serious. In another

situation an instructor sent a copy of a memo, regarding a matter that should have been handled in-house, to a senior administrator of the organization without informing her colleagues. This action helped to precipitate a conflict situation.

Problems related to flow of information. In this study problems related to the flow of information involved ineffective communication skills. For example, not listening, not hearing, inability to express feelings, avoiding face-to-face confrontation, inability to provide specifics regarding a problem, and submitting requests at the last minute. An administrator described an instance where an instructor did not hear or listen to what she was saying. "She was shouting at me. . . . I let her finish her piece because anything I said didn't matter, it wasn't heard." A second administrator described the inability to express feelings in this way:

> Part of the reason the situation came to that point is because some of them thought they had talked in the meeting but they obviously hadn't. It sounded like they were talking about the issues. They never really got to talking about how they felt about them. I think that there were some problems with communication.

A further indicator of ineffective communication skills was lack of attention to detail. For example, an administrator perceived that there had been a lack of attention to the details of the collective agreement on the part of all parties involved in the conflict she related.

Summary. Conflicts that involved problems related to information were frequent. They not only sparked conflict but frequently hampered efforts to deal effectively with the situations. Problems related to the quality of information included inadequate, imperfect, or distorted information, and subterfuge. Problems related to the flow of information involved ineffective communication skills.

Attacks on Integrity

The nursing educational administrators were concerned with the integrity of their programs and they expressed the desire to maintain this integrity. They also alluded to the importance of professional integrity in their descriptions of collegial systems set up to protect it. For example, they discussed tenure review mechanisms and appeal processes that attempted to ensure professional integrity.

Attacks on professional integrity were sources of conflict. They included censuring an administrator's actions, failure to objectively consider the evidence, student/faculty appeals being upheld, and the use of technicalities to overthrow decisions made by administrators, faculty, and academic decision making committees. An example of these attacks was described by the administrator who had her decision to fail a student, made jointly with the faculty, overthrown by an appeal committee. The administrator perceived that the appeal board had failed to consider the evidence objectively. She stated that she

> thought the reasons the appeal board gave for its decision very personal, very paternalistic in nature. Very "poor little girl. How could you do this to her?"

A second illustration involved an academic union who accused an administrator and her department's tenure review committee of bias. Further actions by the union led to intervention by the senior academic officer who truncated the process through the use of an extenuating circumstances clause. The tenure review committee felt they had been "hung out to dry".

Distribution of Resources

This source of conflict included limited resources, loss of funds, perceived lack of support, insufficient time, and equity verses affordability. Resource problems did not occur frequently; however, when discussing them

the informants body language indicate that they were important to them. For example, when discussing lack of support an administrator's facial expressions and body language indicated sadness and depression.

Gender Issues

Much of the information regarding gender issues was volunteered during discussions with the informants rather than having been gleaned from their stories. Therefore, this study produced limited evidence that gender issues play a role in conflicts encountered by nursing educational administrators. However, two concepts, paternalistic attitudes and exclusion, were identified.

Paternalistic attitudes. Several administrators discussed situations where they perceived there had been a paternalistic attitude toward them as women. For example, a student appeal board's attitude toward the female nursing instructors was paternalistic. The informant's voice registered disgust when describing this episode. A second incident involved a bureaucrat who was upset when he found out that a group of nursing educational administrators was planning a new program without his knowledge. He summoned the administrators to his office and chided them for these actions. The informant perceived that the bureaucrat thought that if he reprimanded them the "girls" would give in, they would "lie down and play dead". This informant's voice shook as she talked about the bureaucrat's actions.

Exclusion. One administrator described an incident involving exclusion on the base of gender. A dinner meeting for administrators was held at an all male club and consequently, the informant was excluded. She felt this was not a common practice, although she did admit that much business was conducted on the golf course and in the locker rooms. She perceived this as a predominantly male way of doing business. However, she stated that women

are beginning to use mechanisms such as the business lunch in a similar fashion.

Summary. Two properties defining gender issues have been discussed. Although data regarding this source of conflict was limited, it was introduced a number of times by the informants. Administrators' voices indicated they felt strongly about the matter.

Summary

The conflicts encountered by the nursing educational administrators were complex. They involved numerous factors that concerned the administrators and precipitated conflicts. Direct cause and effect relationships could not be identified as multiple, inter-related sources were present simultaneously in each situation. However, it was possible to identify five major sources of the conflicts encountered by nursing educational administrators: concern for students, the professional status of nursing, the diffuse power structure of academic organizations, information problems, and attacks on integrity. Data provided limited evidence that distribution of resources and gender issues were sources of conflict. Factors like ethics and values were identifiable in each source and appeared to play a major role in several of the conflicts. The sources of conflict are summarized in Table 7, page 54.

Factors That Influence Conflict

A number of themes emerged from the study that were related to but not directly identifiable as sources of conflict. These themes could be seen as factors that influenced the nature of the conflicts, were deemed significant by the informants, and were not isolated incidents. The factors included left over problems, time of the academic year, stability of faculty, ethnocultural differences, and trade-offs within the organization.

TABLE 7
Sources of Conflict
Identified by Nursing Educational Administrators

CONCERN FOR STUDENT
- Quality of education
- Students' psychological safety
- Quality of students' performance

DIFFUSE POWER STRUCTURE
- Shared formal power
- Role of the union

PROFESSIONAL STATUS OF NURSING
- Lack of trust in colleagues
- Unclear role expectations
- Need for further education

INFORMATION PROBLEMS
- Problems related to quality of information
- Problems related to flow of information

ATTACKS ON INTEGRITY
- Censuring administrator's actions
- Failure to objectively consider the evidence
- Student/faculty appeals upheld
- Use of technicalities to overturn decisions
- Complaints to administrator's superordinates
- Bureaucratic concern re: not being involved in decision

DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES
- Limited resources
- Loss of funds
- Lack of support/perceived lack of support
- Insufficient time
- Equitable versus affordable

GENDER ISSUES
- Paternalistic attitudes
- Exclusion

Left Over Problems

Several informants identified problems that originated at some time in the past and had not been dealt with adequately at that time. Examples included ongoing personal problems, tenure granted to an instructor with unresolved problems, and ineffective previous management strategies. An administrator who started a new position paints a graphic picture of a left over problem.

> There was a great deal of unhappiness among the faculty. There was unhappiness about the previous head whose position I was succeeding. There was unhappiness about some of the senior faculty. And just general malaise. It was one of those situations where things weren't getting done because everybody was unhappy about something and bad mouthing each other.

Time of the Academic Year

The nursing educational administrators perceived that conflicts could be more acute at certain times of the academic year. For example, a problem related to a student assignment flared up at the end of a term. The administrator stated that this was a time of increased anxiety for faculty and tempers "run thin."

Stability of Faculty

Disagreements among faculty occurred repeatedly in the informants' stories. When faculty members are new to a situation the conflicts frequently were exacerbated. An informant discussed a situation where several new faculty came on staff in the same year. These instructors formed a clique and seldom interacted with other faculty members. This made it more difficult to identify and deal with problems that arose.

Ethnocultural Differences

Administrators who came from other countries discussed situations where ethnocultural differences may have had an influence on the conflicts. For example, an administrator perceived that certain members of an appeal board

had been influenced by the fact that she came from another country. However, this influence was not overtly expressed.

Trade-offs Within the Organization

The nursing departments described in this study were part of complex, academic organizations. When conflicts occurred it was necessary to consider the needs of the organization and its many segments. Trade-offs sometimes had to be made. These tradeoffs influenced the course of conflicts. For example, a senior academic officer "caved in" to union demands to truncate a tenure review process because she wanted the union to support a move to open the collective agreement and renegotiate monetary clauses.

Summary

Influencing factors played an important role in the conflicts. They were not sources of conflict; however, they affected the course and outcome of the situations. It is possible that had they not been present the conflicts may not have occurred or they may have been manifested very differently.

Management Strategies

Six types of conflict management strategies were evident in the stories told by the informants who participated in the study. Each type included several properties. The types were exercise control, foster collaborative problem solving, manage affect, manage climate, manage information, and seek support. These types are summarized in Table 8, page 57.

Exercise Control

Control, the use of authority or power, is not an action that is frequently associated with academic organizations represented in the study. This was exemplified in earlier discussions about the diffuse power structure of these organizations, which frequently put control in the hands of decision making committees rather than the individual. However, the administrators who

TABLE 8
Conflict Management Strategies Used by Nursing Educational Administrators

EXERCISES CONTROL
- Assist with remediation
- Build a case against a person
- Bypass obstructions
- Communicate parameters
- Enforce parameters
- Warn or confront
- Remove a problem person

FOSTER COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING
- Initiate or encourage discussion
- Mediate disputes
- Manage negotiations
- Redirect responsibility for problem solving
- Seeking help and advice from others

MANAGE AFFECT
- Encourage catharsis/venting
- Manage one's own emotion responses
- Act prudently and without haste

MANAGE CLIMATE
- Ascertain other's concerns
- Help others to achieve personal goals
- Help others to solve problems
- Be principled
- Follow recognized policies and procedures
- Endorse ethical/moral principles
- Establish helpful structures/routines
- Establish parameters
- Model desired behaviour
- Provide moral support

MANAGE INFORMATION
- Foster exchanges of information
- Gather/receive information
- Provide/seek clarification
- Provide counselling
- Share information
- Use experts
- Verify information

SEEK SUPPORT
- Cultivating allies
- Forming coalitions
- Seeking support of key people

participated in this study described seven conflict management strategies that involved aspects of control or power.

Assist with remediation. This tactic was used with both faculty and students. It is illustrated by a situation where an administrator acted as a role model and a facilitator in an attempt to change an instructor's unacceptable behaviour. This behaviour was endangering student's psychological safety. On another occasion this strategy was used with students. The administrator assisted them in taking their concerns about an instructor to the faculty member.

Build a case. Building a case against a person involved collecting evidence regarding the behaviour of a problem person. Although this was sometimes done by noting verbal complaints, the preferred method was collecting written documentation, or establishing a paper trail. Administrators discussed the need for establishing such a written record. Actions in this domain included requesting written documentation regarding instructors' and students' actions from stakeholders. For example, an informant stated that she had requested accurate written documentation be provided about a student who had come to a practicum site under the influence of a mind-altering substance thus endangering patient safety. Another informant requested written descriptions of an instructor's unsafe behaviour from students and kept letters on file from patients the students had cared for.

Bypass obstructions. Bypassing obstructions was a strategy used, for example, when an administrator went directly to the Vice-President (Academic) of the organization, thus bypassing several layers of the bureaucratic hierarchy, to ensure that an instructor's resignation was processed quickly. This instructor, who was compromising student and client safety, had resigned once before but had "pulled the resignation back before it had been processed." In this instance

the administrator wanted to prevent a recurrence of that situation. Another informant, when she validated this strategy during discussion of the findings of Round I of the study, stated that she had "used this strategy on occasion but more frequently with students than with faculty."

Communicate parameters. Communicating parameters involved disseminating information regarding acceptable and unacceptable actions to the parties in conflict. For example, an administrator alerted an instructor's immediate supervisor to the problems related to student and patient/client safety the instructor was having. The administrator also discussed the boundaries within which the instructor was bound to operate. Another administrator informed another unsafe instructor that "students had a right to some degree of comfort in their learning situations."

Enforce parameters. Enforcing parameters involves requiring that the behaviour of an individual, or individuals, involved in a conflict be within defined bounds. The informants in this study accomplished this through a variety of actions which included requesting that a required proposal be submitted immediately. Another informant provided a highly structured working environment for an unsafe instructor and demanded compliance with it. This arrangement was unacceptable to the instructor and resulted in her resignation. A third administrator informed a senior administrator of the organization that she could not make a decision immediately regarding his concerns and that normal departmental procedures would have to be followed.

Warn or confront. Several informants described tactics for warning or confronting instructors and students in order to make them aware of problems. For example, "I asked her to come in and have a chat about this. . . . I tried to suggest that I was concerned about the equity of the situation." Another administrator described a situation where an instructor usually communicated

concerns and complaints via memos to avoid face-to-face encounters. However, on one occasion the administrator insisted on a face-to-face meeting to discuss a problem. Although confrontations were usually oral written warnings were also employed as the following vignette illustrates. An administrator wrote a letter to a faculty member who had become angry and had shouted at her when the administrator had tried to discuss the problem in a face-to-face encounter:

> I had a letter ready for her that basically tried to clarify the situation. First of all, to say that I knew that she was angry. And that I regretted her perceptions of what I had said that might have caused her to be angry. I also wanted to clearly state what I was saying. . . . I suggested that when she returned from leave she come and discuss the situation further.

Remove a problem person. This method was used when all other management strategies had been unsuccessful. Removal was either temporary or permanent. Temporary removal occurred in the cases where students were involved. When they were removed or they failed a program they were able to re-enter it at a later date, under certain conditions. Permanent removal occurred with faculty members. For example, an informant discussed the counselling and remedial strategies that had been used to assist an instructor whose performance was unsafe and unacceptable. When these were unsuccessful the administrator commenced proceedings to remove the instructor from the situation. Another example was provided by the informant who gave a detailed account of the steps she used when removing an instructor who was cruel to students: she first informed the instructor that she was "going to have to record your actions and do something about them." When there was no improvement in the instructor's behaviour "there was a question of whether her contract was going to be renewed [and] I recommended that it not be renewed."

Summary. The nursing educational administrators involved in the study frequently used control to manage conflicts. Careful examination of the contexts

within such this strategy was employed indicates that usually the administrators were concerned about the safety of students or patients/clients. An exception was in the use of warn or confront. Although this tactic was used in situations related to safety, it was also employed on other occasions.

Foster Collaborative Problem Solving

Collaborative problem solving is a win-win type of conflict management strategy. It allows participants to arrive at a consensual solution to a problem. The data indicated that five specific tactics were used by the study informants. Their stories also indicated that nursing educational administrators employ collaborative problem solving frequently when addressing conflicts indicating that it was a preferred strategy.

Initiate or encourage discussion. This strategy took several forms. It included encouraging frank, face-to-face discussion, encouraging the communication of concern, and sharing concerns with other people. For example, frank, face-to-face discussion was encouraged in this way by an administrator:

> We had a strategic planning exercise where we defined goals, you know, the sorts of things that any strategic plan does. . . . Out of this exercise a whole lot of stuff got unearthed.

A second example was described thus by the informant:

> I went into a new job where there was a great deal of unhappiness among the faculty. . . . I talked to every member of the faculty as soon as I could arrange it, within the first two to three weeks that I was there. And there was a particular theme that came out over and over in these talks.

Sharing concerns with the people involved was a sub-theme that ran through the stories of the informants.

Mediate disputes. Mediate disputes was another method that the administrators in this study used to encourage or foster collaborative problem solving. They did this in several ways. For example, they initiated group

discussions and acted as facilitators. An administrator outlined how she used a retreat to initiate group discussion:

> I did not say very much at the meeting. I was trying to be as facilitative as I could in allowing the instructors to talk about what was bothering them. Trying to set up mechanisms to deal with that.

Another informant described a situation where instructors in one team-teaching unit disagreed about how to evaluate a portion of the course. The faculty members were not talking to each other, therefore, the informant called and chaired a meeting to allow the instructors to discuss the problem in a group.

Manage negotiations. Managing negotiations involved such activities as suggesting alternative solutions and checking back on the progress of participants in a situation. Exemplars of how administrators used this strategy include suggesting alternative solutions if a prospective faculty member did not meet all the criteria for tenure, checking back on the progress being made in problem solving, and spearheading a campaign to get approval of a new program by negotiating with the multiple stakeholder groups involved in the situation for support.

Redirect the responsibility. Redirecting the responsibility for solving a problem occurred when an administrator requested a group of students to propose a method of managing their conflict with a peer. A second example of this strategy occurred when an administrator insisted that an instructor rewrite a letter until it was satisfactory, rather than doing it herself.

Seek the help and advice of others. This strategy took such forms as seeking advice and assistance of experts, collaborating with faculty and staff, listening to or receiving advice, consulting those responsible for a task or a problem, and consulting with a superordinate. For example, during a conflict with a student who was under the influence of a mind-altering substance, the administrator consulted with the human resources department of the

organization to ascertain if there were policies or precedents that would apply to the situation. Another administrator, who was concerned about a faculty member, consulted the members of the department's administrative team regarding tactics that might prove effective in the situation. Listening to or receiving advice also occurred in the two situations previously described. Consulting those responsible for a task or a problem was another technique that administrators in this study used to assist in problem solving about conflicts. For example, an administrator met with an instructor to discuss concerns the students had regarding a course the instructor was teaching.

Summary. The five tactics the nursing educational administrators utilized to foster collaborative problem solving included initiating and encouraging discussion, mediating disputes, managing negotiations, redirecting responsibility, and seeking help and advice from others. This preferred management strategy was employed frequently to assist the administrators to arrive at a concensus solution to conflicts they encountered.

Manage Affect

Affective or emotional responses to conflicts were commonly reported by the administrators. These responses included a variety of responses that often precluded the participants in the situation from perceiving a method of handling the situation. Study informants employed the following tactics to manage affect.

Encourage catharsis. This strategy was employed by administrators to assist both faculty and students involved in conflict situations. Encouraging catharsis was evident in such acts as encouraging participants in the conflict to communicate their feelings and discussing the situation. The strategy was described thus by an informant:

> With the students we felt we obviously had to do something. We had this whole group and they were really distraught. So I interviewed them. And I tried to collect data about what had been their experience in the course,

> what had been the problems. . . . They felt it had been a nightmare. And the thing they were most angry about was they felt they had been cheated in terms of what they had got in that course. . . . They were so angry that they had missed so many learning opportunities. They were happy about what we did, I mean they felt they were listened to, they felt appropriate action had been taken.

Another informant discussed a situation where she had delegated the task of responding to an inquiry to her assistant. The reply, composed by the assistant, continued to be of poor quality after three tries; however, the administrator sent it out. When the assistant discovered that the letter had been mailed she came to see the administrator:

> She stormed into my office and said, "How could you send it like that." And I said, "I really would have preferred not to but after three tries if that is the best you can give me then that's the best you can give me." And then we sat down and we had a conversation about what delegation meant. The whole business of responsibility. And we got along famously after that. She never did anything like that again.

Manage own emotional responses. This strategy was employed frequently, usually when administrators had become angry with a participant(s) in the situation. For example, informants made statements like "I tried not to get angry" and "I do not hold grudges."

Act prudently and without haste. Administrators acted prudently when they disciplined themselves to spend time attempting to ascertain as many facts about a situation as possible, when they did not make decisions in haste, and when they provided cooling off periods. For example, an administrator came into a new job where there were several problems brewing. She stated that she took her time getting to know the organization and the workings of her department before she began to address some of the problems. Another administrator described a situation where she was requested, by a senior administrator of the organization, to make a decision regarding a student who was very upset. The student had just been informed that she had an academic failure and could not continue in the program. The request came on the last

day of the term, just before everyone was going to be away for the Christmas/New Year's break. The administrator informed the senior administrator that she would address the matter, in accordance with the department's policies, after the holiday. She reported that, after the break, the student was no longer upset and was better able to think clearly regarding her future plans.

Summary. Emotional responses to conflict can be challenging to deal with. The administrators participating in this study encouraged catharsis, managed their own emotional responses, and acted prudently and without haste to ensure that contentious situations they encountered were managed as effectively as possible.

Manage Climate

The stories told by the informants indicated that the climate, or the atmosphere, they worked in was often tense and stressful and conflicts were frequent. It was frequently necessary for the administrators to manage this climate. A number of tactics were employed to accomplish this.

Ascertain others' concerns. This strategy included such actions as showing an interest in the progress of a faculty member toward her doctoral degree, remaining approachable to provide assistance and counselling to faculty, making the effort to go to an instructor's office when requested to do so by the instructor, and meeting with each faculty member shortly after taking up an administrative post to ascertain faculty concerns.

Help others achieve personal goals. In the stories they told the informants related several incidents of helping others achieve their personal goals. For example, this tactic was employed by an administrator to assist a student who had failed the clinical component of the nursing program. Staff in

the local clinical practica facilities had indicated they did not want to have the student return there. The administrator recounted that

> I called the director of nursing of an out of town hospital with whom we had good relations for five years. I told her I had this person who had failed . . . and I was concerned that she would not get a fair shake locally. . . . The director agreed to take her and so we sent her there.

A second example involved an instructor who was an experienced teacher but new to the organization. There were complaints from the students about the behaviour of this instructor. However, before the administrator started a dossier on the instructor she gave her some time "to get her feet into the new job."

Help others to solve problems. Administrators frequently helped both instructors and students to deal with conflict situations. For example, assistance was offered to new instructors who appeared particularly stressed, faculty members were encouraged to seek the support of their professional association, and practica were restructured to suit student needs. Administrators also informed students that avenues of appeal were always open to them.

Be principled. When involved in conflicts, the administrators repeatedly described situations that indicated that they tried to be principled and endorse ethical/moral principles. For example, an administrator stated that she attempted to abide by the goals of the program when evaluating and/or failing students. In a second incident, involving a student who had many personal problems, the administrator informed the student's clinical practicum preceptor about her academic problems only. Trying to provide a "level playing field" for instructors who were taking leaves to pursue graduate studies was a specific strategy employed by another administrator. A very graphic example is found in the account of the informant who had to deal with a minister of the crown. The latter stated that the first loyalty of nurses in government employ was to the

crown. The administrator told the minister that "for nurses the patient, not the government, comes first."

Follow recognized policies and procedures. In the majority of the conflicts the informants attempted to follow recognized policies and procedures. For example, an administrator and her faculty were "very careful to do it by the book" during a conflict involving a student appeal. A second example involved a departmental tenure review committee who followed the policies and procedures for a tenure review as outlined in the collective agreement.

Establish helpful structures and routines. All the nursing educational administrators who participated in the study discussed structures and routines that existed in their organizations or that they had established to deal with conflicts. The following is a graphic example of a structure established to address a conflict involving students and their instructor. In this situation, 13 out of 15 students enrolled in a course were concerned about the fairness of their grades and appealed them. The administrator had all the student assignments re-read and re-graded by an impartial outsider.

Establish parameters. Establishing parameters was a strategy that was employed very frequently to manage climate. An incident that exemplifies this strategy involved the recommendation of a faculty selections committee:

> The candidate was interviewed by the committee and--in spite of the fact that she had done no scholarly work, had never written an article, had not begun to pursue her doctoral education--the committee recommended her positively. She was recommended solely on teaching expertise. When I got the recommendation I worried that the individual would be a very fine teacher but would do no scholarly work. And then we would be faced with the very difficult problem of a poor candidate for tenure. After discussing it with a variety of people, including the committee, I decided not to accept the committee's recommendation. I did not offer the person a probationary appointment.

A second incident concerned a group of faculty who had voiced concerns regarding the fairness of an assignment which several students had failed. One

of the instructors had made her objections known in a series of memos to the faculty, the administrator, and the administrator's superordinate. When the administrator scheduled a meeting to discuss the issue she specified that the meeting had been called to discuss the *process* used in that particular situation, not whether the students had passed or failed.

Model desired behaviour. Administrators used modeling desired behaviours in an attempt to manage conflicts by changing a participant's behaviour. For example, an administrator stated that she had tried to be a role model for an instructor who had difficulties interacting with students and colleagues. Another administrator stated making friends with her opponents was one of the ways she attempted to manage some of the conflicts she encountered.

Provide moral support. Informants' stories indicated that they spent time reassuring faculty, students, and stakeholder groups about a variety of concerns. For example, this moral support involved reassuring students that when they provided feedback on instructor evaluations their anonymity was assured and reassuring practica agency staff that the administrator was aware of the existence of the problem.

Summary. Managing climate is an important and frequently used strategy for the management of conflicts in nursing educational administration. It involves strategies to improve the atmosphere in which the disagreement is occurring, thus allowing the situation to be productive and creative. Tactics used by the informants to manage climate included ascertaining others' concerns, helping them to solve their problems and achieve their goals, being principled, establishing helpful routines and parameters, modeling desired behaviours, and providing moral support.

Manage Information

Information problems emerged as a major source of conflict for the nursing educational administrators who participated in the study. From their stories it is evident that they spent considerable amounts of time managing information in their attempts to address these conflicts. They employed the following seven tactics to assist them.

Foster exchanges of information. Fostering exchanges of information was exemplified by such actions as acting as a facilitator so that group members could vent their feelings, requesting the head administrator of an agency used for a clinical practicum to put her concerns regarding the actions of an instructor in writing, and having a face-to-face meeting to clarify the situation and express concerns.

Gather or receive information. Most of the administrators indicated that they spent considerable effort either receiving or gathering information. Examples include listening to what a group of students "had to say," requesting written documentation about a student who came to the clinical area under the influence of a mind-altering substance, and

> sending a letter to all the students who had this person as an instructor. I invited them to put in writing their assessment of her work. I got 76 letters, which was unheard of in terms of the volume of mail I would get regarding such a matter.

Provide or seek clarification. The administrators often needed to either provide or seek clarification regarding information. They accomplished this by a variety of ways. For example, an administrator, in an attempt to address an instructor's accusation of lack of support, tried to explain to the instructor that she had supported the instructor's application for professional leave. Another informant stated that she had provided clarification, in writing, of her position

regarding an instructor's frequent leaves with pay to pursue further graduate study.

Provide counselling. The informants' stories indicated that they repeatedly counselled colleagues, students, and stakeholder groups. This conflict management strategy was exemplified by administrators who advised instructors and students with problems to seek professional assistance. It also occurred when an administrator voiced concerns to an instructor about the effect the instructor's behaviour was having on colleagues.

Share information. Sharing information involved the actions of sharing the results of student evaluations of teaching with instructors, and vice versa, and providing an instructor's immediate supervisor with information regarding the instructor's problems. Also, an informant stated that she discussed a student's academic and substance-abuse problems with the administrator of the clinical agency where the student was going to do a practicum.

Use experts. This was another strategy that the administrators used to manage conflicts related to information problems. Experts included an outside consultant, the organization's human resources officer, the academic staff association, and the president of the organization.

Verify information. This strategy was described by several informants. The following incident exemplifies it very clearly. When an instructor reported that she had a student on a clinical practicum site who was exhibiting the signs of substance-abuse, the administrator advised the instructor to "contact the psychiatric nursing instructor and perform a sobriety test on this student." A second example involved an administrator who knew there were going to be problems with the tenure applications of several faculty in her department. She went to the vice-president academic of the organization prior to commencement

of the process and requested him to verify her beliefs about not granting tenure to instructors "who had not earned it."

Summary. The nursing educational administrators frequently used the strategy, manage information to deal with the information problems they frequently encountered. They accomplished this by fostering exchanges of information, gathering and receiving information, providing and seeking clarification, providing counseling, sharing information, using experts, and verifying information.

Seek Support

Although seek support was not employed as frequently as other management strategies, from the informants' stories it was evident that they were adept at seeking support to assist them in managing some of the conflicts they encountered. The allies they cultivated and the coalitions they formed included key people from within their educational organizations and community stakeholder groups. For example, when confronted with a serious conflict involving a deputy minister of the government an administrator reported cultivating such allies as her counterpart in a similar organization and the president of her organization. The president then organized a coalition of the major stakeholders in the situation. Another informant related the story of her efforts to get a collaborative nursing education program approved. Actions involved cultivating allies in the other nursing educational organizations in her district, forming coalitions with them and other major stakeholders, and seeking the support of the professional association and practicing professionals in the area.

Summary

Six conflict management strategies utilized by nursing educational administrators emerged for the stories told during this study. These stories also provided numerous properties or subtypes for the strategies. Analysis of the data indicated that exercise control, foster collaborative problem solving, manage affect, manage climate, and manage information were used frequently to manage conflicts encountered in nursing educational settings. Seeking support was employed less often. However, when the administrators cultivated allies and formed coalitions they were able to garner the support of such influential people and groups as university presidents, professional associations, and unions.

Effectiveness of the Management Strategies

The stories the nursing educational administrators told provided data regarding the effectiveness of the conflict management strategies they employed. Effectiveness appeared to have been dependent upon the context of the situation and fell into four categories: 1) management strategies were effective; 2) the administrator perceived her strategies were effective but participants in the conflict were not satisfied and took further action, for example appealed the administrative decision; 3) management strategies did not result in a solution that the administrator considered effective although there were some positive results; and 4) management strategies were judged (almost) completely ineffective.

Strategy Effectiveness and Context

Study informants frequently employed the same strategies to address similar conflicts. However, the contexts of the situations and the effectiveness of the strategies differed, indicating that effectiveness was context dependent. The following situations provide examples of this relationship. An administrator

employed the tactic remove a problem person, part of exercise control, to remove a student who had failed the practicum component of a nursing course. The student withdrew from the program and did not appeal the failure. A second student, required to withdraw from a nursing program for the same reason, appealed the failure. An examination of the contexts within which the failures took place reveals differences. The first student was young, single, and had a strong family support system to assist her address her problems. The second student was several years older, had children, was experiencing a family crisis, and had no emotional and family support system. Both administrators employed the same management strategy but the results were much different.

Another second comparison of the relationship between context and the effectiveness of a conflict management strategy involves the use of encourage catharsis, part of manage affect. An instructor submitted an unsatisfactory letter to an administrator and asked her to sign it. After this had occurred a number of times, the administrator encouraged the instructor to talk about the problem. The instructor vented feelings of frustration and lack of respect "left-over" from the previous administration. The administrator, who was new to the department, indicated her respect for the worth of the instructor's efforts and the problem did not reoccur. The strategy was effectively employed. When another administrator, who had been in her position for several years, encouraged a group of new instructors to vent their feelings the strategy was unsuccessful. The group expressed their concerns; however, the problems continues and most of the group resigned their positions a few months later.

A third illustration that supports the importance of context in conflict management revolves around the use of establish parameters, a property of manage climate. An informant employed the tactic effectively in a situation where members of a teaching team where having a disagreement over a

student assignment and the process used to formulate their objections. The administrator perceived that it was the process used to lodge the complaint rather than the complaint itself that had caused the problem. Therefore, at the beginning of a meeting called to discuss the situation, the administrator informed teaching team members that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the process used in the situation. Team members shared their concerns and reached a consensus regarding the issue. In another instance, an administrator decided not to accept the recommendations of a faculty selections committee. When the instructors were upset with the administrator's decision, she outlined the parameters she had employed to guide her. Faculty refused to acknowledge the administrator's parameters and continued to resent her decision. The strategy was less effective in this situation.

Strategies That Were Effective

When managers characterized their strategies as effective, positive results were always seen. For example, when a group of students successfully appealed failure of an entire course because they had failed one component, pharmacology mathematics, a conflict ensued. The administrator's superordinate had intervened and decided that the students could not be failed for such a reason. Members of the nursing department, including the administrator, were upset because they considered proficiency with pharmacology mathematics an essential skill for nurses. When faced with a decision they could not change, the administrator and the faculty altered the entrance requirements to ensure students came to nursing program with the required mathematics skills. Following institution of this change the problem did not occur again. They had established a new parameter, part of managing climate, and the strategy was seen to be effective.

Indicators of effective administrative action include expressions of student satisfaction with the outcomes of the conflict, problem people no longer present, individuals with problems begin to address these problems, and increased discussion occurring. However, these indicators of effectiveness were dependent upon the circumstances surrounding the situation. For example, with one individual whose behaviour was unsatisfactory, confronting her with her problems and providing counselling resulted in her attempting to address her problems. Under different circumstances the same actions had no effect and the unsatisfactory behaviour continued.

Strategies Perceived as Effective

In this category are strategies that were perceived as effective by the administrators but not all the participants in the situation were satisfied. For example, one administrator perceived that her strategies were effective in removing the problem person; however, the problem person was not satisfied and took further action. In a second example a student who failed a program due to unsatisfactory performance appealed the decision. In each of these cases the administrative action of removing the problem person was effective; however, the individual did not perceive it that way.

Strategies Perceived as Not Effective

In a conflict with several newly hired instructors the administrator used the strategies of attempting to ascertain others' concerns and assist others to solve problems. These strategies were not effective and a number of the instructors resigned. However, this conflict spurred the development of a new orientation procedure which subsequently received positive evaluations and was adopted by the organization as a whole. The strategy used to manage the conflict was not effective but positive results did occur.

A second example involved the decision making processes of a tenure review committee which were interrupted by the intervention of the senior academic officer of the organization and the union representing the faculty members. The informant stated

> I'm upset that the [senior academic officer] and the union interceded before we had completed the process of the tenure review. As far as I'm concerned it violated the whole collegial process of a collective agreement. Committee members suffered a tremendous amount of collegial abuse all year because of those decisions and didn't get any official validation because the process was not allowed to complete itself. It was a tough, tough year for the four members of that committee.

The positive aspect of that situation was that the faculty members were given a two year extension of their probationary status.

Strategies That Were Not Effective

In a number of incidents the strategies the administrators used to manage conflicts were ineffective. The following incidents illustrate this point. An administrator tried a number of strategies to either remove a problem instructor or to change her behaviour and nothing happened. Students continued to be unhappy and the instructor could not be removed from the situation. In another case an administrator attempted to assist an instructor deal with her misperceptions that the administrator had not supported her professional leave application. Management of the conflict was not effective, the instructor continued to be angry, and the "conflict went underground."

Summary

The results of the study indicate that the effectiveness of strategies used by the informants to manage conflicts varied. Also, it was apparent that effectiveness was related to context. The same strategy, employed with similar participants, in a different context did not always produce the same result.

Outcomes of Conflict Situations

When considering the outcomes of the conflicts discussed in this study it is apparent that they present as complicated a picture as do the situations as a whole. There are outcomes that involve the administrators, instructors, students, the administrators' superordinates, and the multiple stakeholders all of whom were all by the conflicts. One example involves consequences that ensued when an administrator failed a student because of unsafe clinical performance. The student appealed the failure and the administrator's decision was overturned by the student appeal board. This action caused further conflict in two areas. First, the student returned to the program and continued to be a problem. Secondly, the actions of the appeal board in considering the evidence were considered subjective and paternalistic by the instructors and the administrator. The initial outcome of the administrative action was that the student failed. However, this outcome was not a final one for the administrator. When the student returned to the program her behaviour did not improve and she was again failed. This led to more conflict. The outcomes were not simple and they involved multiple stakeholders. Distinct outcome concepts, that is gains, losses, and residual effects emerged from the data. These are summarized in Table 9, page 78.

Gains From Conflicts

Gains identified from the data included personal growth fostered, learning from the situation, creative problem solving, a problem person no longer present, an appreciation that students sometimes fail, and the realization that they were not responsible for students' personal baggage.

When students were forced to deal with an instructor whom the administrator could not remove, she said they developed coping mechanisms to deal with the situation, "just to get through." When discussing the situation with

TABLE 9
Outcomes of Conflict Situations
Described by Nursing Educational Administrators

GAINS
Personal growth fostered
Learning from situation
Creative problem solving
Problem person no longer present
Appreciation that students sometimes fail
Realization that not responsible for student baggage
LOSSES
Upset stakeholders
Undermining of integrity
Lack of trust
Problem person continues to be present
Loss of resources
Administrative decisions appealed
Disruptions in academic and professional lives
Just trying to get through
Support has its price
RESIDUAL EFFECTS
A sense of accomplishment
Increased awareness of importance of political action
Delays in new program start-up
Delays in student completion of required learning experiences
Changes in program configuration
Continued concern about future problems
Decreased level of faculty trust in administration decisions

the administrator after it was over the students stated they felt they had grown personally while dealing with the situation.

Informants frequently indicated that they had learned from the conflict situations they were involved in. Indicators of learning included expressions of a change in attitude, admissions of error, acknowledgement that they would handle the situation differently next time, a realization of what could be accomplished when effective coalitions are formed, and the need to take risks.

One informant appeared very anxious when discussing a conflict involving a student who had a substance-abuse problem. However, she stated

> this whole situation has fostered a realization within the organization that students do sometimes fail. And that it is not always a negative thing. Also, people within the organization have come to realize that students frequently bring personal, emotional, and behavioral baggage to the academic setting with them. But this baggage is not the responsibility of the academic organization.

The informant felt that the recognition of these two facts was a gain acquired in this conflict situation.

Losses in Conflicts

Losses resulting from the conflicts described by the informants included upset stakeholders, the undermining of organizational, departmental, and program integrity, a lack of trust in the processes of the organization, problem persons continuing to be present, loss of resources, administrative decisions appealed, disruptions in the students' academic and professional lives, students just trying to get through, and "support has its price."

Examples of losses associated with conflicts included the case of an administrator who perceived that when a student appeal board reversed a student failure the integrity of the program was being undermined. Also an informant stated that the collegial processes of the organization were

undermined when the union and the vice-president academic truncated the decision making processes of a tenure review committee.

Students just trying to get through was perceived as a loss by the informant who described it. The students developed coping mechanisms that allowed them to complete the course requirements; however, these "just trying to get by" adaptations included not saying anything in class when challenged by the instructor, and withdrawing from the course and taking it through another organization in order to fulfill program requirements. The informant considered it unacceptable that students should have to make these adaptations at all.

The outcome, "support has its price", was identified in a situation where stakeholders who supported the administrator in her efforts to get a new program approved insisted they be included in the new program, as compensation for that support. The result was a dramatic increase in the number of students that the organization had to deal with. This was seen by the administrator as the down-side of a very positive situation.

Residual Effects of the Conflicts

A number of the effects of the conflicts described by the informants persisted for a prolonged period of time. These effects were varied and situation dependent. For example, when one student lost an appeal of a failing grade she did not pursue the matter further. When this happened with a second student, in a different situation, she took the matter to civil court. They included a sense of accomplishment, increased awareness of the importance of political action, delays in new program start up or student completion of required learning experiences, changes in the configuration of a program, continued concern about future problems, a decreased level of faculty trust in administrative decisions, and the eruption of a new conflict.

Affective responses to the conflicts also persisted over time. Examples included anger, alienation, feelings of "being let down" and "hung out to dry", and perceptions that a manipulative student "was getting away with it". One administrator stated that she realized she had been manipulated by the students.

Types of Conflict

The types of conflict identified in the literature were encountered in this study. However, boundaries between the types were frequently blurred and unclear, and often several types occurred simultaneously. It was seldom possible to say that a conflict was a "pure" type.

A vivid example of several types of conflict occurring simultaneously was related by an administrator who experienced intrapersonal conflict about shared decision making and faculty autonomy while also dealing with interpersonal, and intra- and inter-group conflict. She stated she believed in the principle of shared decision making but had a difficult time ensuring that her department ran smoothly because she could not make unilateral decisions. She said that "sometimes I have to play the heavy." Members of a faculty decision making group in her department were disagreeing with each other, with colleagues outside the group, and with the administrator. The situation involved interpersonal, intragroup, and intergroup conflict. It was also fostering conflict with community stakeholders in other organizations, interorganizational conflict. While attempting to manage the conflict the informant was dealing with several types of conflict.

Most of the stories told by the informants involved conflicts between several individuals and groups. Other departments and organizations were sometimes involved. Individuals included students, instructors, administrators, senior administrators, community and practica stakeholders, politicians, and

bureaucrats. Groups were composed of students, instructors, stakeholders, appeal boards, and unions. Examples of other departments that were involved in the conflicts were counselling services and the registrar's offices. Other organizations were hospitals, community health facilities, and government departments.

Summary

The informants' stories revealed that the conflicts experienced by nursing educational administrators were complex, often involving several layers of discord within each situation. They frequently involved numerous players who travelled down very convoluted paths. Manifestations of the conflicts were varied and frequently involved strong emotions.

Five, major inter-related sources of conflict emerged from the stories. They were a concern for students which encompassed affect or personal attributes, the diffuse power structure of educational organizations, the professional evolution of nursing, information problems, and attacks on integrity. Ethics and values were an important factor in all the sources of conflict. Gender issues as a source of conflict were briefly discussed by several informants; however, insufficient information was available upon which to base analysis or comparison. A similar case occurred with conflicts related to resources. Several factors that influenced conflicts but could not be identified as sources were also described.

Six conflict management strategies were identified, each being delineated by a number of subtypes. The strategies included exercise control, foster collaborative problem solving, manage affect, manage climate, manage information, and seek support.

Effectiveness of the management strategies could be divided into four categories: effective, perceived effective, perceived not effective, and not

effective. However, successful use of the strategies was found to be situation dependent, what was effective in one context was often not in another.

Outcomes of the conflict situations were also identified. They encompassed gains, losses, and residual effects. Gains included fostering personal growth, administrator learning, problem people removed, an appreciation that some students fail, and the realization that the personal baggage that students bring with them is not the responsibility of the educational organization. The losses identified were upset stakeholders, integrity undermined, development of a lack of trust, problem person still present, loss of resources, administrative decisions appealed, disruptions in students' academic and professional lives, and students developed coping mechanisms just to "get through." In the conflicts described by the informants there were persistent residual effects as well. Positive effects included a sense of accomplishment and an awareness of the effectiveness of political action. Examples of negative effects were delays in program start-ups and student learning, concern for future problems, and changes in program configuration.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The nursing educational administrators who participated in this investigation told stories that were a rich source of data upon which to base the grounded theory analysis. When compared to selected literature sources the findings of that analysis lead to a number of conclusions and/or propositions. This chapter will make that comparison and discuss the possible premises or propositions arising from it.

Conflict Is a Complex Social Process

Strauss (1987) stated that "social phenomena are complex phenomena" (p. 6). Thomas (1976) defined conflict between two social units as "a process which includes the perceptions, emotions, behaviours, and outcomes of two parties" (p. 891). Similarly, Deutsch (1973) stated that conflict is a situation where "incompatible activities" take place in a social environment. These definitions indicate that conflict is a complex social phenomenon or process. The findings of this study showed conflicts in nursing educational administration to be complex, they involved incompatible activities, and they were social processes. They were also very difficult to define and frequently seemed to resemble a constantly shifting, changing, amorphous blob. Figure 2, p. 86 is a two-dimensional attempt to illustrate the conflicts encountered by the nursing educational administrators. The core notion and first proposition identified in this study is therefore *that conflict is a complex social process*. Findings that support this include:

* The situations described by the informants in this study involved multiple stakeholders.

* The stakeholders came from the within the focal organization (instructors, students, administrators), and from outside organizations: government,

professional organizations, collective bargaining groups, the community, the agencies where student practica took place, and settings in which graduates of the programs eventually sought employment.

* Inter-related types of conflict and layers of discord could be identified in the stories of the informants.

* Multiple sources of conflict were present in each of the conflict situations described by the informants.

* A number of conflict management strategies were employed to address a conflict situation.

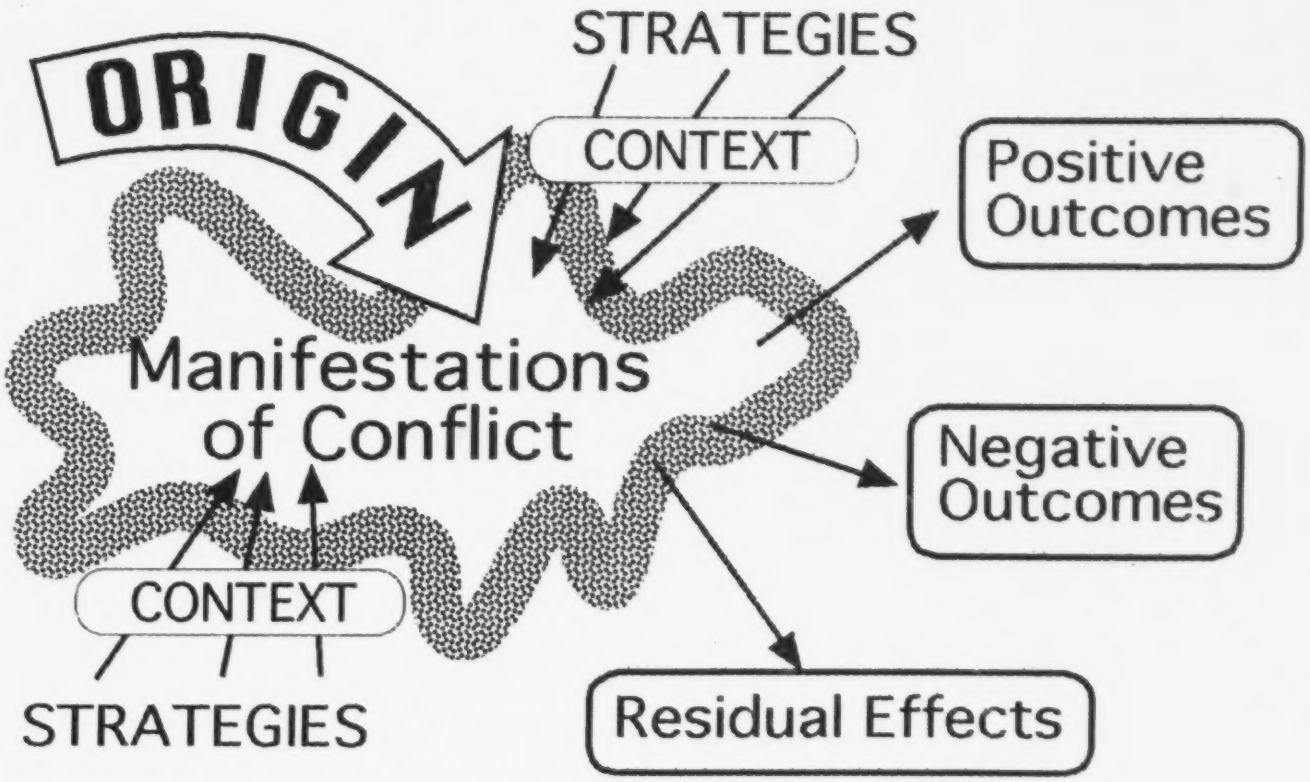
* The diverse needs, values, and agendas of the stakeholders had to be considered by the administrators when dealing with the conflicts.

* Each conflict produced a variety of outcomes and residual effects that had an impact on the stakeholders.

When Deutsch (1973) and Thomas (1976) discussed conflict they did not include the wide range of stakeholders found in this study. Blumberg and Blumberg (1985) and Iles (1984) were among the first researchers to identify the plurality of stakeholders as a significant consideration. Blumberg and Blumberg (1985) stated that administrators in educational settings deal with larger numbers of stakeholders than do their counterparts in business. Birnbaum (1988) presented a detailed description of the complexity of the post-secondary education system and the plurality of stakeholder groups that administrators in the system must deal with. He stated that the differences between academic and business organizations is striking and that "traditional management theories do not apply to [academic organizations]" (p. 28).

The findings of this study support the contributions of Birnbaum (1988), Blumberg and Blumberg (1985), and Iles (1984) to the information about conflict: that administrators in educational organizations must deal with a large

Figure 2
Conflict is a Complex Social Process



number of stakeholders. Administrators must not only deal with the stakeholders, they must consider them as integral components of the conflict. Stakeholder groups have values and needs that influence the decisions and actions of those within the organization. One administrator summed it up succinctly when she said, "The professional community in the region wanted the nursing program to be housed in the acute care hospital setting. When it became a college program instead, we had to work very hard to emphasize excellence or we would not have received support from the community."

Types of Conflict

The findings of this study revealed that several types of conflict occurred simultaneously in the situations, their boundaries were blurred, and it was seldom possible to identify a pure type. A number of researchers studying conflict in educational organizations have also revealed this blurred picture. For example, Iles (1984) described a situation where multiple individuals, groups, and organizations were in conflict and Boyd (1989) found that the teachers in her study experienced intrapersonal and intragroup conflict. It would appear that when administrators in educational settings encounter conflicts they may not be able to identify then as a specific "type". The second proposition arising from analysis of the informants stories is that *the traditional types of conflict occur in nursing educational administration; however, several types are frequently present in each conflict.* Support for this premise will be outlined at the end of the discussions regarding each of the sources of conflict where the types of conflict related to these sources are identified. See Table 10, page 88 for a comparison of the types and sources of conflict.

TABLE 10
Comparison of Types of Conflict with Sources of Conflict Encountered

SOURCES	TYPE OF CONFLICT
Concern for Students	Interpersonal Intradepartmental Interorganizational Intrapersonal
Diffuse Power Structure	Intragroup Intradepartmental Interpersonal Interorganizational Intraorganizational
Professional Status of Nursing	Intradepartmental Intragroup Interpersonal Intrapersonal Interorganizational
Information Problems	Interpersonal Intradepartmental Interorganizational Intraorganizational
Attacks on Integrity	Interpersonal Interorganizational Intradepartmental Intraorganizational
Gender Issues	Intrapersonal Intraorganizational
Distribution of Resources	Intrapersonal Intradepartmental Other with Community Stakeholders Intragroup Interorganzational

**Intergroup conflicts frequently involved groups within one department and are classified with intradepartmental unless one of the groups in conflict was outside the department. In that case, the conflict was classified as intraorganizational.

Sources of Conflict

A comparison of the sources of conflict identified in the general literature, the literature relating to schools, and in this study are summarized in Table 11, page 90. The table reveals that while there are areas of agreement across all three settings, there are several areas where inconsistencies occur.

Affect had been identified as a source of conflict in the general literature and in investigations relating to conflicts in schools. It occurred in this study as a part of instructor behaviour in the *concern for students* category (see Table 5, p. 37). A review of the literature also revealed that conflicts related to role expectations and role performance have been found in all settings. In this study these problems were found in relation to several sources of conflict. Distribution of resources is discussed in all settings although there are differences in classification. Some authors include power and/or roles, others limit resources to means. Information problems were identified in both educational settings and in the general literature. Attacks on personal integrity occurred in school settings and similar attacks on professional integrity were found in college and university settings.

The general literature discussed differences in ideals and philosophy as part divergent goals. Differences in regard to ethics and values were found in this study and could be related to divergent goals. However, a careful examination of the situations reveals that ethics and values were an important factor in each source of conflict. This suggests that there is more involved than a disagreement over goals.

Areas of incongruence included concern for students, diffuse power structure, professional evolution of nursing, and gender issues. These areas of difference are discussed in the following sections. Because ethical issues were

TABLE 11
Comparison of Sources of Conflict

General Literature	Schools	This Study
AFFECT Emotions (Deutsch, 1973, Owens, 1981) Attitudes (Coser, 1956 Walton & McKersie, 1965)	Emotions (Fris,1992a) Attitudes (Fris, 1992a)	Part of Concern for Students' Personal Attributes/Attitudes
CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF REALITY Beliefs about reality (Deutsch, 1973) Misunderstandings (Ruben, 1978) Divergent goals (Owens, 1987) Priorities (Deutsch, 1973) Ideals, philosophies (Loewen, 1983)	Disagreement re goals (Fris, 1992a)	
DISTRIBUTION OF LIMITED RESOURCES territory (French, Kast & Rosenzweig, 1985 power (Johns, 1988) jurisdiction (Pondy, 1967) materials/services (Fisher, 1981) autonomy (Loewen, 1983)	Disagreement re means including resources, roles (Fris, 1992a)	Diffuse power structure Lack of group cohesiveness (Part of professional status of nursing) Distribution of Resources
		Concern for Students Professional Status of Nursing
Incongruent role expectations (Walton & McKersie, 1965)	Perceptions of professional role (Boyd, 1989)	Part of concern for students, diffuse power structure, professional status of nursing
		Gender issues
	Attacks on Integrity (Fris, 1992a)	Attacks on Integrity
		Issues related to ethics and values (part of most sources).
Information Problems (Deutsch, 1973; Ruben, 1978) Misunderstandings Misperceptions	Faulty Information (Fris, 1992a)	Information Problems

present in most categories and the informants indicated that they felt strongly about these issues, they will be addressed in a separate section.

Concern for Students

When the study informants discussed students they became very animated and their body language emphasized their strong feelings regarding students and their well being. They appeared to care passionately about students. The following discussion compares the findings of this study and those of other educational researchers.

Instructor performance. In this study the most frequently occurring conflicts involved instructors. Twelve of the 20 situations described by the informants revolved around instructor role performance. Fris (1992a) found that about one in 10 conflicts involved incongruent role expectations with regard to instruction. Loewen (1983) also reported questions regarding instructional competence as a source of conflicts encountered by school superintendents. One of the sub-classes of concern for students identified in this study was lack of expertise or knowledge, a competence descriptor. Woodtli (1987) and Valentine (1988) did not identify this as a source of conflict.

The findings of this study correspond with those identified in the school system, although the administrators in this study described conflicts related to instructors' role performance more frequently than did school principals. However, the findings do not correspond to those of Woodtli and Valentine, both of whom conducted their studies in nursing educational settings. This raises a number of questions:

Were the results of this study just a one time occurrence? This does not seem likely in light of the results reported by Fris (1992a) and Loewen (1983).

Were the settings of this study a factor? The study involved administrators in the college system, an area not addressed by the other studies. Could this

have had a bearing on the results? It is possible but not likely as 12 of the 20 situations described in this study occurred in a university setting and eight in a college setting.

Were the findings of this study different from those of Woodtli and Valentine as a result of the different research methodology used? Fris (1992a) and Loewen (1983) employed methodologies similar to this study, interviewing administrators and performing content analysis. Their results support those of this study. Valentine (1988) did a case study in which an analysis of conflict management was a small portion. An investigation into conflict was not the focus of the study and therefore this source of conflict may not have been revealed. Woodtli (1997) used a forced answer questionnaire to gather data regarding sources of conflict. None of the 25 sources of conflict listed referred to instructor teaching performance. This *a priori* instrument may have been an inappropriate data collection method. Greenfield (1986), Hodgkinson (1991), and Lincoln (1985) have expressed concerns about studying organizational phenomena in educational administration using *a priori* methods. The use of these methods could explain why Woodtli (1987) did not identify this source of conflict.

Student performance. Part of the concern for students that the nursing educational administrators in this study voiced involved student performance. A review of the general literature does not include information of employee performance as a source of conflict. Research involving schools is also very vague about this factor. Fris (1991b) did make references to incidents involving students. However, except on one notation, events revolved around disagreements with parents or teachers regarding the students rather than direct dealing with the students. Loewen (1983) did not identify conflicts with

students as a source of conflict. Valentine (1988) and Woodtli (1987) did not refer to conflicts with nursing educational students.

Affect. Affect was a common source of conflict in this study. Personal attributes or attitudes were the predominant affective sources of conflict identified by the administrators in this study, the majority in relation to instructor and student performance. The literature supports this finding (Boyd, 1989; Deutsch, 1973; Fris, 1991b; Woodtli, 1987).

Summary. Concern for students was an important source of conflict for the informants. Many aspects of this concern were identified. There is support for the findings related to instructor performance in literature references to role performance. However, some questions were raised. In the area of student performance little support could be found. The affective sources of conflict related to performance support what is found in the literature.

There are indications that further research into the relationship of concern for students and conflict needs to be conducted. These indications include a lack of support in the literature for the findings of this study in relation to concern for students and the questions raised by the comparison with existing literature.

Several types of conflict were apparent in relation to concern for students. In the 12 situations where this source of conflict was present interpersonal and interdepartmental conflicts occurred frequently. Other types were encountered occasionally.

Diffuse Power Structure

In this study, participants frequently voiced concerns about power relationships within the shared governance systems of their organizations. These concerns centered around shared formal power, responsibility without formal authority, the role of the union, and ethical issues. In the literature, only Bergquist (1992) and Birnbaum (1988) outlined how the shared governance

systems under which colleges and universities operate provide a rich breeding ground for conflict involving this diffuse power structure. The frequent occurrence of conflicts surrounding the governance systems identified in this study support these authors' contention. Perhaps this is evidence that it is an important source of conflict in post-secondary educational organizations. The importance the informants placed on this source of conflict and the lack of data support the need for further research in this area.

Comparison of the types of conflict revolving around the diffuse power structures described in this study to those discussed in the literature revealed that several types were related to this source of conflict. The most common types identified by the informants were interpersonal, intradepartmental, and interorganizational conflicts. Intragroup conflict occurred infrequently.

Professional Status of Nursing

This source of conflict was of great concern to the administrators who participated in the study. They frequently described situations that revolved around it or where it was a factor in either the development of the situation or the management of it. Nursing is relatively new to the academic setting. Except for a very limited number of university baccalaureate programs, nursing education has been part of the college and university system for less than 30 years. Graduate nursing programs in Canadian universities have existed for about the same period but the first doctoral program in Canada was approved only in 1991 (Kerr, 1992). Instructors, many who have come to academe from highly bureaucratic health care organizations where the emphasis has been on practice rather than education and scholarship, are struggling with the requirements of their role as faculty members in colleges and universities.

Although colleges do not place an emphasis on research, they do require faculty to be expert educators and self-governing professionals. Yet, in these

settings there are many faculty who have only baccalaureate preparation and who are grappling with efforts to acquire graduate education in nursing. This is a continuing problem and approximately one-half of nurses with master's degrees have had to pursue graduate study in disciplines other than nursing (Canadian Nurses Association, 1992). Many have been expert clinical practitioners but have had little preparation for their role in a self-governing, academic setting.

The immaturity of nursing as an academic discipline could result in unclear role expectations, inadequate preparation for shared governance, and conflict. A review of the general literature and the research conducted in schools lists unclear or incongruent role expectations as a source of conflict. In the nursing educational literature Woodtli (1987) found that issues relating to faculty compliance with university expectations were a frequent source of conflict. In this study the role expectations in the area of scholarship and shared-governance appeared to be unclear rather than incongruent. One nursing educational administrator put it like this.

> Nursing in the university is. . . we are kind of like adolescents. We are not quite grown up yet. We are not middle aged like arts and science. We are not young adults either. . . . We have to recognize our developmental stage.

However, except for Woodtli's (1987) reference, this source of conflict is not addressed in the nursing and post-secondary educational literature.

Another element that may be involved in the conflicts related to the professional status of nursing is a lack of group cohesiveness related to a lack of trust in colleagues. In the colleges and universities where the nursing educational administrators involved in this study worked there were well established systems of collegiality and shared governance. Faculty had the authority to make decisions via the committee structure, an important aspect of

administration in post-secondary educational settings. The administrators described situations where decision making was ineffective and a lack of group cohesiveness led to conflict and the administrative structure was not effective.

In many ways the literature prepares us for this, because it identifies several important prerequisites for effective group function:

1. Group cohesiveness (Johns, 1988).

2. Psychological maturity. Hersey and Blanchard (1988) found that the psychological maturity of group members, which includes trust, was a key factor in group cohesiveness and effectiveness.

3. The type of decision. Owens (1987) maintained that *emergent* problems, those that are ambiguous and the elements are intertwined, are most effectively solved by groups. *Discrete* problems with clear cut elements are most effectively solved by experts.

4. Motivation. Owens (1987) discussed the motivation of the group members as another aspect that must be considered when utilizing group decision making. The members must want to be involved and to perceive that they have a personal stake in the decision.

In this study, indicators of lack of group cohesiveness included a decreased level of trust among colleagues within the group, one member not supporting the decision of the group, and the formation of cliques within the group. The ability to trust colleagues is a measure of maturity and that prerequisite to group cohesiveness may have been missing in the groups described by the informants. In fact, one administrator stated that her faculty was "immature" as a group. Lack of support may also indicate lack of trust, as may the formation of cliques. The problems these groups were addressing were emergent ones; for example, preparing a proposal for a new program initiative. The members of the groups had a personal stake in the problems.

However, it was not clear whether they wanted to be involved in the decision making process. It appears, then, that two of the prerequisites for effective group function were present (emergent problems, personal stake in the problems), two were lacking (group cohesiveness and psychological maturity), and a fifth one (desire to be involved in the decision making) was not addressed.

For post-secondary educational administrators, particularly those whose disciplines are relatively new to the setting, it would seem necessary to separate the evolution of their profession from incongruent role expectations. While the category "Professional Status of Nursing" does contain elements of that genre, it also involves other factors that do not fit well. The area of lack of trust and lack of group cohesiveness does not seem congruent with unclear role expectations either. Further research into the impact that professional evolution and its related problems have on conflicts in nursing educational administration needs further study before definitive propositions can be made. The only conclusion that can be reached at this time is that the professional status of nursing is a source of conflict and that it involves unclear role expectations, a lack of trust in colleagues, and a lack of group cohesiveness.

Interdepartmental conflicts, a type of intraorganizational conflict that includes intragroup conflicts, were common in situations where the ongoing professionalization of nursing was involved. Interpersonal conflicts were the next most common types involved with this source of conflict. Intrapersonal and interorganizational conflicts were identified but occurred rarely.

Information Problems

Information problems as a source of conflict are not mentioned frequently in the literature. Deutsch (1973) described them as conflicts over "what is": over facts, information, knowledge, beliefs about reality" (p. 15). Ruben (1978)

identified them as misunderstandings and Tosi & Carroll (1976) as misperceptions. Fris (1991b; 1992a) discussed faulty information as a root of conflict for school principals. No references were found regarding information problems as a source of conflict in the post-secondary educational literature.

However, the administrators in the current study viewed information problems as serious. One of the areas they identified was lack of written documentation regarding the problems of students and faculty. Other areas of concern included defective information, subterfuge and ineffective communication skills.

Types of conflict that were identified in relation to information problems included interpersonal, intergroup, and interorganizational. Interpersonal conflicts occurred most often; however, there was little difference in the frequency of occurrence.

The dearth of information regarding information problems in educational settings allows for limited comparative with the findings of this study. This is a concern and points to the need for more research into conflicts related to information problems in post-secondary educational settings. A second indicator for further investigation is the frequency with which conflicts related to information problems were related by study informants. This frequency of occurrence combined with the sparsity of resources available to administrators in post-secondary educational settings also points to a need for additional research.

Attacks on Integrity

In this study attacks on integrity were identified as a source of conflict. The informants described situations where their actions had been censured by their superordinates and technicalities had been employed to overturn the decisions of faculty governing committees. The administrators described how

these actions made them feel, an affective response. Examples of their comments include, "like I had been hung out to dry" and "the integrity of the department [or program] had been compromised." The context of the situations and the administrators' comments raise some questions regarding attacks on integrity as a source of comment. Were these attacks on integrity or were they questions regarding the competence of the administrators? Are integrity and competence inter-related or are they one in the same thing? Was there another issue involved?

Webster's (1977) dictionary defines integrity as a state of soundness or completeness or firm adherence to a moral or artistic code. Competence is being competent or having adequate abilities or qualities. Comparison of the dictionary definitions indicates that while the two are related they are not interchangeable terms. Competence or having adequate abilities would seem to be part of soundness or completeness or adherence to moral or artistic codes but not the total requirement for integrity.

Attacks on integrity did not appear in the literature until Fris (1991b; 1992a) discussed this source of conflict in relation to conflict in schools, where it was found to occur infrequently. Loewen (1983) identified questions about competence as a source of conflict encountered by school superintendents. Although competence is certainly part of integrity it does not constitute the whole part. Perhaps that is why Fris (1992a) classified questions about competence as incongruent role expectations and behavioral norms.

In this study an example of an attack on integrity that was related to competence occurred when an administrator was censured by a superordinate, and the administrator perceived this as questioning her competence. Other instances of attacks on professional integrity occurred when decisions of faculty governance committees were overturned. The administrators believed they had

acted in the most professional way possible and yet appeal boards or the union had questioned their actions and their decisions. In two of the instances the administrators questioned the objectivity of appeal boards who overturned decisions on the basis of a technicality. The surface issue in these two cases could be said to have been questions about competence. However, an underlying issue may have been questions regarding the administrator's values, i.e., client and/or student safety as opposed to the individual rights of the student or the instructor as espoused by the appeal board and the union. In the third incident a senior academic officer intervened in a tenure process before it was completed to truncate the work of the committee. This was done at the instigation of the union who maintained that the committee was not following proper procedure. The committee members thought they were following the procedure. In later conversations with the senior academic officer, the administrator discovered the senior academic officer had supported the union, not because he thought it was necessarily right, but because he needed its support for an organizational initiative to open the collective agreement and re-negotiate financial matters. Not surprisingly, the administrator perceived that she and the other committee members had been slighted. As with the two previous cases the surface issue would seem to be one of competence; yet, careful examination of the case indicates that the committee members in all three cases felt their professional integrity had been attacked. It would seem that these cases were not issues of competence; rather, they may have sprung from the undermining/attack on personal values.

The informants perceived that their professional integrity had been attacked when their decisions and actions were questioned. Fukuyama (1992) stated people desire recognition and are always struggling for it. This recognition is not just being seen to exist. Fukuyama (1992) states that people

believe "they are worthy of respect . . . because they possess a certain value and dignity" (p. 152). If integrity involves completeness and people need to be perceived as having value and dignity to be complete then integrity and recognition are closely related. Therefore, the findings of this study support Fukuyama's claim. When the administrators were attacked they were not gaining recognition for their efforts and thus felt demeaned.

The issue of professional integrity was important to the administrators who participated in this study. Comparing the results with those of the studies done in schools, it can be seen that the findings support those of Fris (1992a) and lend partial support to Loewen (1983). However, no mention of attacks on integrity could be found in the post-secondary education literature. The importance the administrators attached to this source of conflict and the small number of studies that address it indicate that further study is needed in this area.

Analysis of attacks on integrity in relation to the types of conflict led to the identification of all the types. Interpersonal and intraorganizational conflict were the most common.

Issues Related to Ethics and Values

There is support in the literature for commitment to high standards and "mission" (for example, Mintzberg, 1973; Sergiovanni, 1987); however, there is little discussion about ethics, morals, and values. Foster (1986), Greenfield (1991a, 1991b), and Hodgkinson (1983, 1991) have pointed out that studies into people's values and ethics were discouraged in rational-positivist research, the paradigm utilized for most of the organizational research to date. These authors have also emphasized the necessity of considering values, morals, and ethics in educational administration.

Loewen (1983), in his study of school superintendents, identified incongruent philosophies and ideals as a source of conflict; Fris (1992a) grouped them with divergent goals. Ethics and values are part of an individual's philosophical outlook and influence his or her goals. Differing ethics and values were an integral part of the conflicts described in this study. In this sense the findings of this study lend support to Fris's (1992a) and Loewen's (1983) stance.

An issue related to ethics and values that was involved in several of the conflicts described in this study was patient/client or student safety. It is difficult to group this source of conflict neatly with divergence of goals because the outcomes could be so serious. Examples of these serious consequences include injury to a patient in a clinical practicum setting and professional, academic, or psychological damage to a student. This aspect of the problem does not support Fris's (1992a) stance. It appears more appropriate to consider this source of conflict separately. Hodgkinson (1991) described the practical purpose of values as "concepts of the desirable" (p. 91). He proposed the thesis that when there is more than one set of values present in a situation they are continually in conflict. Hodgkinson (1991) concluded that education, "by virtue of its generality of purpose and its humaneness or overriding concern with the total human condition," can be "distinguished by its moral aspect" (p. 143). A number of authors have concluded that nursing is a moral discipline (for example, Johnson, 1991; Moccia, 1988). Therefore, when one is dealing with two disciplines that concern the human condition, and where the inappropriate actions of practitioners can cause harm to the people they serve, it seems inadequate to say that conflicts related to incongruent ethics and values are the result of incongruent role expectations.

A number of authors have addressed the issue of ethics and values in relation to administrators. Francis and Woodcock (1990) stated that

organizational leaders establish and maintain values and that values are essential in making decisions. These authors also maintained that in noncommercial organizations "critical acclaim by informed observers" was the criterion for success (p. ix). In this study the data relating to ethical/moral values do not support what Francis and Woodcock have stated. There were no indications that the leaders established values although there was limited evidence of concern for maintaining established norms and expectations. For example, one administrator, when discussing an instructor's lack of respect for students, questioned why that person was involved in education when she did not value students. This value for students was pervasive in the stories related by the informants in the study although there was no indication it was developed by the leaders.

In a discussion of ethics in schools, Strike, Haller, and Soltis (1988) maintained that moral issues "concern our duties and obligations to one another, what constitutes just and fair treatment of one another, and what rights we each have" (p. 4). These authors confirm that the use of "words such as right, ought, just, and fair [is] common" when discussing moral issues (p. 3). Freedom of expression, personal liberty, equality, respect for persons, and democracy are moral issues educational administrators need to attend to. The stories told by the administrators who participated in this study lend support to the stance taken by Strike et al. (1988) in the areas of democracy, equality, and respect. Aspects of democracy were apparent in the shared decision making structures of the academic organizations. Safety aspects discussed by the informants included keeping students and patients/clients free from harm, not injuring them either physically or psychologically. These concerns regarding the safety of students and patient/clients would seem to go beyond the moral

issues of equity and respect identified by Strike et al. (1988). Freedom and liberty were not addressed by the informants.

Hodgkinson (1983) has stated that education is a moral act and has proposed a model that educational administrators could use when analyzing their values. This model proposes three types of values. The highest level of values, or Type I, are those principles that "go beyond reason . . . and imply an act of faith" (p. 39). Type II values, the next level, are divided into Type IIA - consequences and Type IIB - consensus values. Consequences involve these things that are right or wrong. Consensus includes those that are good or bad. The values identified by the informants in this study appear to be at the Type II level. Student and patient/client safety are consequences values. Protecting these groups is right, allowing harm to come to them is wrong. Equity issues could be classified as Type IIB, or consensus values - equality is good, inequality is bad.

The nursing educational administrators who participated in this study identified the issues surrounding ethics and values in relation to concern for students, diffuse power structure, professional evolution of nursing, and attacks on integrity. They also described them as important to their professional behaviour. The literature emphasizes the necessity for educational administrators to examine their own ethics and values, and to be familiar with those of the people they work with and serve. However, there are few data available to help these administrators deal with issues related to the role of ethics and values in conflicts. This points to an urgent need for further research in this area in order to provide information about the relationship of ethics and values to conflicts in nursing educational administration.

Distribution of Resources

The distribution of resources was identified as a source of conflict in this study. However, it did not occur as frequently as some other sources. Problems in this area were concerned with insufficient time, lack of support, and limited funds. Resources as a source of conflict has been written about widely by authors from Pondy (1967) on. The findings of this study correspond with those of other researchers.

The types of conflict discussed in the literature could also be identified in relation to the distribution of resources. Intradepartmental and interorganizational conflicts were most common. These conflicts involved individuals, groups, the educational organizations, and stakeholder groups including politicians and bureaucrats.

Gender Issues

Gender issues as sources of conflict have not been widely discussed in the organizational literature. Three informants in this study outlined their recollections about gender issues. Examination of the interview transcripts identified only one incident where conflict was explicitly the result of a gender issue - exclusion from a dinner meeting of educational administrators held at an all-male club. This was an interpersonal and an intraorganizational type of conflict. The other issues identified in the study were either the informants' impressions that a gender issue existed or were part of discussions not directly related to the stories they told. This area was discussed only briefly by the administrators who participated in the study. Perusal of the post-secondary education literature shows that only two authors (Neff, 1986 and Valentine, 1988) looked specifically at gender issues. A third study (Woodtli, 1987) mentioned a possible connection between gender and conflict management in her discussion of findings. Unfortunately, the limited amount of data available in

this study does not allow for comparative analysis with the three studies. However, it is an area that should be addressed in future studies because there is a dearth of information about the relationship of gender and conflict in nursing educational administration. Additional information about gender and conflict would assist the administrators because most of the people involved in nursing education, both faculty and students, are women.

Summary

When identifying the sources of conflicts encountered by nursing educational administrators it is necessary to consider the context in which these situations occur. Both the disciplines of nursing and education are people orientated and their main concerns are client related. The organizational and governance systems of the colleges and universities where this study's informants worked were well developed collegial systems where decision making was shared. Most of the literature about conflict discusses the phenomenon as it occurs in profit-oriented organizations or in the political and labor relations arenas. Therefore, it is difficult to compare the findings of this study to those discussed in the majority of the literature. There are areas where the findings parallel those reported in the organizational literature. However, there are a number of instances where the causes of conflict identified in the literature seem too simplistic for the complexities of colleges and universities. There are also areas where little agreement is apparent.

When comparing the sources of conflict that emerged from the data collected from the informants participating in this study to the types of conflict discussed in the literature it is possible to begin to tentatively identify possible patterns. With few exceptions, all the types were manifested in relation to each of the sources. Interpersonal and intradepartmental conflicts were the most commonly occurring types encountered by the administrators. These types

could be identified in relation to each source of conflict except gender issues. Per chance, it would appear that the conflicts that nursing educational administrators in colleges and universities encounter involve multiple types of conflict.

Nursing educational administrators in post-secondary educational settings must deal with very complex situations involving numerous stakeholders. Conflict episodes involve a number of types of conflict intertwined with each other. The sources of these episodes can be traced to multiple interrelating factors. The causes of conflict identified in the literature fail to consider these factors. To provide useful information to the administrators who must deal with these conflicts it seems necessary to expand the classes of the sources of conflict.

Propositions that can be put forth regarding sources of conflict include:

* *Concern for students is an overriding issue for nursing educational administrators.*
* *The diffuse power structure of academic organizations provides a rich breeding ground for conflict.*
* *During the evolution of a profession conflicts can occur as a result of unclear role expectations and inadequate group functioning.*
* *Issues related to ethics and values are involved in most conflicts, especially those related to concern for students.*

Factors That Influence Conflict

Examination of the findings of this study revealed a number of factors that influenced the conflicts described. While these factors could not be identified as the sources of the conflicts, it is possible the conflicts would have been less involved or lengthy had the factors not been present. A number of these factors have been identified previously:

* Owens (1987) stated that rules and procedures frequently complicate a conflict to the point where they create conflict. In this study the processes and procedures of the organization were a factor in conflicts involving instructor competence. For example, cases of questionable instructor competence were much more difficult to deal with when an instructor was tenured.

* Thomas (1976) proposed a process and a structural model of conflict, both of which identify factors that influence a conflict. The process model seeks to identify the "events within an episode and to trace the effect of each event upon succeeding events" (p. 892). The structural model assists administrators to identify structures and parameters that influence conflicts. The influencing factors identified in this study that occur also in Thomas's (1976) models include: process factors--left over problems, tradeoffs within the organization; structural factors--time of the academic year, stability of faculty.

* Fris (1990) identified historical circumstances, personal traits, and access to information as factors that influenced conflicts in schools. The nursing educational administrators frequently associated conflict with people who had a history of problems. They also identified personal problems and traits such as maturity as factors that influenced the conflicts they described. These findings conform to Fris's (1990) results. Access to information did not emerge as a factor rather than a source of conflict.

The findings of this study support the suppositions of both Thomas (1976) and Owens (1987) regarding influencing factors in conflicts and lend credence to Fris's (1990) results. They also emphasize the fact that administrators in post-secondary educational organizations need to be aware of the nature of these influencing factors when attempting to understand and manage the conflicts they encounter.

Manifestations of Conflict

The manifestations of conflict described by the informants were numerous. They included complaints or reports of concerns, perceptions that problems were serious, threats, and difficulty understanding. However, the largest group was the affective manifestations, which were part of every conflict situation described by the informants. The manifestations encountered are similar to those identified in the literature (for example, Deutsch, 1973; Fris, 1992; Maurer, 1991; Owens, 1988; Thomas, 1976).

Management Strategies

A limited number of investigators have examined conflict management as it relates to educational administration. It has also been noted that there are inconsistencies between the management strategies used in educational settings and those discussed in the general literature (for example, Boyd, 1989; Fris, 1991b; Loewen, 1983). The following discussion provides support for these authors' claim. To that end, the conflict management strategies used by the nursing educational administrators in this study will be compared with those identified in other inductive research studies and in Thomas' (1976) model of conflict management. See Table 12, page 110 for summary.

The Thomas (1976) model is frequently cited in educational settings (eg. Kimbrough & Nunnery, 1988; Neff, 1986; Owens, 1987; Wirt & Christovich, 1989; Woodtli, 1987). therefore the model will be compared to the findings of this study in an attempt to begin to ascertain its robustness when applied to educational settings.

Exercise Control

The exercise of control was used frequently by the administrators in the study. This frequency of use could reflect administrator preference for this type

TABLE 12
Comparison of Conflict Management Strategies

Strategy	DE	FRIS (1992b)	LOEWEN (1983)	BOYD (1989)	VALENTINE (1988)	THOMAS (1976)
Exercise Control	X	Be assertive Re-arrange the stage Use time strategies	Control of rewards Environmental control Rules & Regulations		Dominate	- Compete - Dominate
Foster Collaborative Problem Solving	X	Attempt to manage conflict collaboratively		Seeking external help Seeking to resolve	Open discussion	Collaborate
Manage affect	X	X				
Manage Climate	X	Provide resources		Deciding who's right		
Manage Info	X	X	Information Control/distortion	Communicate Weighing the other Sensing a threat		
Seek Support	X	Cultivate allies Manage coalitions	Coalition formation			
Avoid		Concede Avoid	Withdrawal	Retreat	Ignoring	X
Diffusion					Social events	
Compromise						X
Accommodate				X		X
Denigration			X			
Appearing to lose			X			

of strategy. However, close examination of the contexts of the conflicts refutes this claim. In the main, these contexts related to student or client/patient safety--an overriding ethical/moral concern, as has been indicated previously. A comparison with the literature indicates that this conflict management strategy was used by informants in the studies conducted by Fris (1991b, 1992); Loewen, (1983); and Valentine, (1988). However, these authors did not mention the strategy in relation to student or patient/client safety. Thomas (1976) identified this strategy labelling it compete or dominate.

Foster Collaborative Problem Solving

This win-win conflict management strategy was used a number of times by the administrators in the study. Boyd (1989), Fris (1992), and Valentine (1988) also reported use of this strategy. Fris (1992) found that his respondents usually attempted to utilize a collaborative problem-solving approach when dealing with conflicts. Boyd (1989) reported her informants sought help from others and sought to resolve disputes. Valentine (1988) observed that occasionally open discussions occurred when nursing educational instructors disagreed. Loewen (1983) did not report collaborative problem solving as a strategy used by his informants. Thomas (1976) described this strategy simply as collaborate.

Manage Affect

Affect has been identified as a frequent source of conflict in educational settings (Fris, 1990; Woodtli, 1987). Managing affect, addressing problems associated with the emotions and/or the personal attributes of the participants in a conflict, was identified as a strategy used by the administrators in this study. They acted prudently, encouraged catharsis, managed their own emotions, provided cooling off periods, and stopped talking and listened. The only other study where this strategy was identifiable was that conducted by Fris (1992).

Manage Climate

This strategy appeared to be the one most frequently used by the nursing educational administrators. Fris (1992) and Boyd (1989) also identified this conflict management technique. Fris's (1992) subtypes were similar to those identified in this study. Boyd's (1989) category "deciding who is right" would seem to fit with the theme managing climate. This strategy was not discussed by the other authors and Thomas does not include it in his strategies.

There would appear to be a number of elements of enhancing relationships in this theme; for example, ascertaining other's concerns, assisting others, modeling desired behaviour, and providing moral support. Eight of the nine informants in this study were women. Helgesen (1990), in a diary study modeled on Minzberg's (1973) technique, found that one of the leadership techniques *women preferred* was enhancing relationships. Canary, Cunningham, and Cody (1988) studied the management of interpersonal conflict among American university students. They found the picture confusing, although there was limited support for some differences in relation to gender. Jones (1990) conducted a meta-analysis of the studies found in the Educational Administration Quarterly, 1-22 that addressed gender differences and concluded that there was a "lack of evidence of any true gender difference" as a predictor of organizational behavior (p. 29). This lack of evidence could be the result of several factors including methodological concerns, lack of relevant data, and that gender was not a factor.

However, in view of Helgesen's finding it is possible that the frequent use of these relationship enhancing strategies by the administrators in this study is connected with gender. Boyd (1989) made reference to female participants reaching a point where they felt sorry for the male involved in the conflict, "a feeling which sometimes encouraged them to accommodate the other's need in

the conflict" (p. v). The findings of this study, along with those of Boyd (1989) and Helgesen (1990), do not provide direct support for the idea that females use relationship enhancing strategies more frequently than men when dealing with conflict. It does, however, suggest the possibility that there may be differences in the way men and women sometimes handle conflict. Fris (1992) does not indicate whether men or women more frequently utilized the climate management strategies. Because there are few data available with which to compare the findings of this study it is not possible to draw any definite conclusions in this area. This points to a need for further investigation.

Manage Information

This conflict management strategy was employed as frequently by the nursing educational administrators as it was by the administrators interviewed by Fris (1992) and Loewen (1983). Boyd (1989) also identified it as a tactic used by teachers. The literature on collective bargaining and political conflict contains numerous descriptions of information being withheld and distorted (for example: Toffler, 1990; Walton & McKersie, 1965). However, Valentine (1988), in her study of a hospital school of nursing, did not refer to it. Furthermore there is little information about this strategy in the general literature. Deutsch (1973) discussed conflicts over information problems. Putnam and Folger (1988) allude to them in their communications research but did not identify information management as a technique for addressing conflict situations. The frequency with which the informants in this study and others identified information management strategies as methods of dealing with conflict situations indicates it is an important technique for educational administrators. The frequency of identification and use of the strategy, along with the lack of information available, indicates a need for further study in this area.

Seek Support

Seeking support (cultivating allies and forming coalitions) was a strategy that the informants in this study utilized occasionally. They stated that it was an important and helpful technique. Loewen (1983) found that it was a tactic used by superintendents when dealing with school boards, etc. Fris, Eiserman, and McIntosh (1992) also identified seeking support as a strategy employed by school principals; although Boyd (1989) and Valentine (1988) did not discuss it. The importance that the informants attached to this strategy and the lack of information about it indicate the need for further investigation in this area.

Robustness of the Thomas Model

The Thomas (1976) model of conflict management is frequently cited in the educational literature. Data collection instruments based on the Thomas Model have been used by a number of researchers studying conflict in post-secondary educational settings (for example, Neff, 1986; Woodtli, 1987)

Support for the model. The strategies identified in this study lend some support to the Thomas model; however, differences were identified:

1. Thomas' (1976) model identified *competition* as a conflict management strategy used with a large degree of assertiveness, to satisfy one's own demands. Thomas used the word compete to indicate control. The administrators in this study certainly used controlling strategies frequently. However, examination of the contexts within which they were used showed that the administrators were usually not addressing their own concerns, except as they related to student or patient\client safety. Generally, the administrators were concerned with the effect the conflict was having on a vulnerable group of stakeholders, and they used controlling strategies to protect this group. The nursing educational administrators were not "competing" as Thomas

conceptualized. Because of the difference in motivation, this part of the Thomas model does not fit well.

2. *Collaboration*, or collaborative problem solving, was a strategy used regularly by the administrators interviewed for this study. The educational administration literature also identifies collaboration as a strategy. Thomas indicated that collaborative problem solving is the ideal conflict management strategy. The findings of this study lend support for the Thomas model in relation to this strategy. Also, the strategy "seek support" might be related to collaborative problem solving in the sense that the administrators formed coalitions and collaborated with allies to assist them to manage conflicts.

Strategies not accommodated by the model. Thomas (1976) did not discuss managing information, yet he stated that his structural model of conflict focused "upon the conditions which shape conflict behaviour in a relationship" (p. 889). Taking Deutsch's (1973) contention that conflicts occur over faulty information and beliefs about reality, and that these misrepresentations frequently affect relationships and cause conflict, one wonders why Thomas did not include this important area in his model. In the area of information management, Thomas' conflict management model does not appear to be validated for use in educational settings by the findings of this study.

Other strategies used by the administrators were not part of the Thomas model although it might be possible to identify faint echoes of that model's strategies in the ones used by the nursing educational administrators. Certain aspects of managing affect might be considered as accommodation, such as when the administrators provided cooling off periods and stopped talking and listened. Aspects of managing climate might have been efforts to accommodate. These include assisting others to achieve goals and providing moral support. While it is possible to identify threads of Thomas's model in

these strategies that were certainly cooperative strategies and showed a willingness on the part of the administrators to satisfy the other parties' concerns they do not fit with the other aspect of Thomas's accommodation--unassertiveness continua. The administrators were not lacking in assertiveness. They did not avoid the conflicts they encountered. They took whatever actions possible to manage them.

Robustness of the model. It would appear that although the findings of this study support aspects of Thomas's contingency model of conflict management, that support lacks robustness. The administrators who participated in the study used competition and collaboration. However, they did not avoid conflicts, they did not appear to compromise, only certain aspects of the strategies they used could be related to accommodation, and they did not use control strategies in the fashion indicated by Thomas. These findings point to inadequacies when using this model to explain how conflict is managed in post-secondary educational organizations. These organizations are oriented to people rather than to products. Therefore the strategies used to manage the conflicts that occur within them are concerned, not only with managing the behaviour of people, but also with enhancing relationships. Strategies such as managing affect, managing climate, seeking support, and exercising control to ensure safety are examples of this people-oriented focus. When administrators in post-secondary educational settings are required to manage conflict, it is vital that they are aware of the importance of utilizing strategies that enhance relationships.

Summary

The six classes of management strategies used by the nursing educational administrators indicate similarities and differences when compared with the literature. Similarities were found in the following areas:

* Fostering collaborative problem solving is a management strategy frequently discussed in the literature and the findings of this study support that contention.

* Affect has been identified as a frequent source of conflict in educational settings. The management of it emerged as a strategy used by the administrators in the study.

* Seeking support and forming coalitions is a management strategy identified by a number of studies into conflict in educational settings. There is little other information regarding this strategy in the literature.

Dissimilarities were found in the following areas:

* Exercising control, or domination, was reported frequently; however the motivation for its use by administrators appeared to be safety as opposed to assertiveness to satisfy personal demands.

* The nursing educational administrators in this study frequently managed climate when dealing with conflicts but there is little mention of this strategy in the literature. There are also indications that the use of this strategy may be connected to the gender of the participants in the conflict. However, this connection is tenuous.

* Managing information was a frequently used conflict management strategy for the administrators who participated in this study. Although information problems as sources of conflict are frequently discussed in the literature there is little mention of management of them as a method of dealing with conflict.

The strategies used by the educational administrators in this study conform to those reported in the profit motivated business organizational literature in the areas of control and collaborative problem solving. There is some support for the Thomas model of conflict management; however, this support lacks robustness.

Several areas regarding the conflict management strategies used by nursing educational administrators in post-secondary educational settings require further investigation. They include the use of control and how it relates to safety, the relationship of gender to management strategies, managing climate, managing information, and the role of coalitions and support when dealing with conflicts. Also, findings of this study indicate that further research is necessary regarding the use of the Thomas model when investigating and explaining conflict management in post-secondary educational settings.

Premises or propositions that may be made regarding the management of conflict in nursing educational administration include:

* *Control is usually used to manage conflict only when student or patient/client safety is involved.*

* *Conflict management strategies that emphasize collaborative problem solving and building relationships are favoured by nursing educational administrators.*

Effectiveness of the Management Strategies

There is little discussion regarding effectiveness in the literature on conflict. A number of authors discuss the idea that effectiveness of the strategy depends on the context within which the conflict occurs (for example, Johns, 1988; Owens, 1987). The findings of this study support these assumptions. They also indicate that the effectiveness of the strategies needs to be examined from the perspective of the different participants in the situation. The successful removal of a problem person from the situation, while being viewed as a successful management technique by the administrator, may not be viewed similarly by the person removed.

Educational administrators in post-secondary settings need to be aware of context, and that the effectiveness of the strategies they elect to use to

manage conflicts is dependent upon the situation. Although the study findings indicated this there is little information available in the literature to guide the administrators in the choice of the strategy that should be the most effective. This area needs further study.

A premise or proposition that can be made regarding the effectiveness of conflict management strategies is:

* *The effectiveness of conflict management strategies used in nursing educational administration is context dependent.*

Outcomes of Conflict

A number of authors discussed the positive and negative effects or outcomes of conflict. For example Deutsch (1973) cited stimulation of interest, the "process and testing of oneself", and creative problem solving as positive outcomes (p. 9). Owens (1987) described the negative effects of conflict as a "zero-sum, win-lose situation that is potentially so dysfunctional to organizational life; everyone strives to avoid losing and losers seek to become winners" (p. 245). Individuals strive to attain their preferred outcome, emotions become involved, and hostility develops between the participants in the situation.

In this study, positive outcomes of conflict were noted (as summarized in Table 9, p. 78). Examples include:

* Personal growth fostered.
* Learning from the situation.
* Creative problem solving.
* A sense of accomplishment.

The findings of this study regarding the positive outcomes of conflict lend support to literature.

Examples of negative effects, or losses described by the informants that took part in this study include:

* Upset stakeholders.
* Loss of resources.
* Administrative decisions appealed.
* Problem person continues to be present.

The negative effects, or losses, described by the nursing educational administrators in this study could be termed "zero-sum, win-lose" situations and parallel those described in the literature.

When authors such as Coser (1956), Deutsch (1973), and Owens (1987) discussed the positive and negative effects of conflict they also discussed long-term consequences. They indicated that conflict can be a creative force that allows organizations to develop the strategies needed to adapt to changing times. The opposite effect is that conflict can cause organizations to become dysfunctional and unable to adapt when changes are necessary.

In this study, the long-term consequences or residual effects of the conflict situations were marked in certain areas and minimal in others. Long-term, positive effects that were identified included increased awareness of the importance of political action and changes in program configuration. These changes reflected conflict as a creative force that allowed the administrators, and the organizations they were part of, to react to the changing needs of nursing education. They were able to implement actions that reflected the current and proposed future needs of the stakeholders in nursing education and health care. Such findings reflect the views of such authors as Coser, Deutsch, and Owens.

Long-term negative effects were also identified in the study. However, the findings did not indicate that any of the organizations had become dysfunctional and unable to adapt to the current educational needs of stakeholders. The residual effect of one ongoing, ineffectively managed conflict was that the

administrator perceived that it could erupt into a serious problem at any time, that it was a latent conflict. The administrator had not been able to effect a change in the behaviour, or remove from the situation, an instructor who exhibited faulty role performance and ethical/moral values not congruent with those of her colleagues or the organization. The administrator described the situation as a time bomb waiting to explode. A second example of a long-lasting effect that caused administrators concern but was not dysfunctional involved faculty members who did not support group decisions that were made within a collegial, shared-governance structure. Undercurrents were present even though no open conflict occurred. One informant stated that colleagues subsequently had difficulty trusting an individual who had behaved in such a manner.

The findings of this study, then, echo the views relating to the long-term effects or the aftermath of conflicts described in the literature. However, some differences were noted. The finding last noted above adds another dimension to the literature concerning the results of ineffectively managed conflict: Organizations can continue to be effective when conflict continues to exist. Moreover, it is important to note that the administrators would not be taken by surprise when a latent conflict once again became problematic. Further, their past experience with the situation could be utilized to assist them when exploring alternative management strategies that might be employed in future dealings with the conflict.

Discussion of the aftermath of conflict in the literature does not clearly indicate what happens when ineffectively managed conflicts persist but do not become dysfunctional. There is also little indication what learning the administrator acquires to better handle the conflict should it again become problematic. Additional study in this area may be useful.

Discussions Regarding Methodology

A concern that was generated early in this study was the inconsistent and confusing picture presented by the research done to date into conflicts in educational settings. A limited number of investigators have examined the phenomenon of conflict as it relates to educational administration and there are inconsistencies in the results of these studies. Additionally, discrepancies have been noted between the management strategies used in educational settings and those discussed in the profit motivated, organizational literature (for example, Boyd, 1989; Fris, 1991b; Loewen, 1983; Neff, 1986; Valentine, 1988). A review of the educationally orientated studies also raised concerns about the methodologies used. Authors such as Bergquist (1992), Birnbaum (1988), Greenfield (1991a, 1991b), Guba and Lincoln (1989), Hodgkinson (1991), and Lincoln (1985) have questioned the appropriateness of *a priori* methods when conducting studies into phenomena encountered in educational administration. Of the few studies investigating conflict management in post-secondary educational organizations that have been reported all but one have employed *a priori* techniques, several employing the Thomas (1976) model.

This study, in response to the concerns of Hodgkinson (1991), Greenfield (1991a, 1991b), and others, investigated the nature of conflict from an inductive stance, grounding the findings in the data. This methodology provided rich data for analysis. Grounded theory allowed for identification of numerous themes relating to conflicts in post-secondary educational administration, some of which had been discussed previously and some which were new. The results also provided indicators for numerous areas where further investigation is necessary in order to more fully explain conflicts in colleges and universities.

While the methodology utilized in the study was effective in providing rich data which revealed numerous themes relating to the nature of conflict, it must

also be noted that there was considerable correspondence of the findings with those identified in the *a priori* studies which have been conducted into various aspects of conflict. It would appear that the two approaches are complementary, not exclusive.

Conclusions and Implications

The conflicts encountered by the nursing educational administrators sprang from multiple sources, were complex, and involved numerous stakeholders. The situations often resembled an amorphous, constantly shifting blob that was difficult to define and from which no direct cause and effect relationships were identifiable. It would appear that multiple types of conflict occurred in relation to each source of conflict identified. In a number of areas insufficient information was available for comparative analysis and further study is indicated.

The management strategies used by the administrators corresponded, to some degree, with those identified in the literature; however, there are areas where few data are available. Limited support for the Thomas (1976) model was found but several strategies employed by the informants could not be identified with those described by the model. The findings regarding effectiveness of the strategies were found to be related to context and thus lent support to the contingency model. Nursing educational administrators should be cautious in their use of the Thomas model. Further study is indicated in several areas.

Several premises or propositions were identified from the findings of the study (Table 13, page 124). This investigation into the nature of conflict was of a preliminary nature and theorizing beyond the premise level would be premature. Table 14, page 125 summarizes the conclusions, implications, and recommendations of the study.

TABLE 13
Premises and Propositions

Conflicts encountered by nursing educational administrators are complex social processes involving multiple stakeholders
The traditional types of conflict occur in nursing educational administration; however, several types are frequently present in each conflict.
Concern for students is an overriding issue for nursing educational administrators.
The diffuse power structure of academic organizations provides a rich breeding ground for conflict.
During the evolution of a profession, conflicts can occur as the result of unclear role expectations and inadequate group functioning.
Issues related to ethics and values are involved in most conflicts, especially those related to concern for student.
Control is usually used to manage conflict only when student or patient/client safety is involved.
Conflict management strategies that emphasize collaborative problem solving and building relationships are preferred by nursing educational administrators.
The effectiveness of conflict management strategies used in nursing educational administration is context-dependent.

TABLE 14
Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations

CONCLUSIONS	IMPLICATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS
1. Conflict is a complex social process. 1.2 Multiple stakeholders	Non-traditional theories needed. Consider an integral part.
2. Types of Conflict 2.1 Types not pure, boundaries blurred	Need to be aware that several types occurring simultaneously.
3. Sources of Conflict 3.1 Concern for Student Instructor Performance	Number of questions raised. Need for further study.
Student Performance	Lack of data exists. Need for further study.
Affect	Literature supported.
3.2 Diffuse Power Structure	Aware it frequently relates to shared decision making. Lack of data exists. Need for further study.
3.3 Professional Status of Nursing	Prepare faculty for shared decision making. Address group function. Apply contingency model to decision-making processes. Lack of data exists. Further study is needed.
3.4 Information Problems	Lack of data exists. Further study indicated.
3.5 Attacks on Integrity	Attacks on competence or values. Further study indicated.
3.6 Distribution of Resources	Fits with what is already known.
3.7 Gender Issues	Dearth of information. Further study needed.
4. Issues Related to Ethics and Values	Nursing and education concerned with values. Involved in most conflicts. Little data available to assist administrators. Need for further study.
5. Influencing Factors	Need to be aware of them
6. Management Strategies 6.1 Exercise Control	Related to safety. Further study needed.

Table 14 (continued)

CONCLUSIONS	IMPLICATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS
6.2 Foster Collaboration	Support for literature
6.3 Manage Affect	Support for literature
5.4 Manage Climate	Incorporates elements of enhancing relationships. ?Connections with gender. Further study needed.
5.5 Manage Information	Important strategy. Information lacking. Further study needed.
5.6 Seek Support	Little information available. Further study needed.
6. Robustness of Thomas Model	Support lacks robustness. Not people oriented. Further study needed.
7. Effectiveness of Strategies	Depends on context. Information lacking. Further study needed.
8. Outcomes	Positive and negative. Can be a creative force. Latent conflict persists. Support for literature. Further study needed.

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Appendix A

The Informants' Stories

The stories outlined here are summaries of those the informants told about the conflicts they had encountered. Participants in the conflicts have been given names at random. All gender is female, although several of the participants were male. Few details are presented and all identifying comments have been omitted to maintain anonymity.

Situation One:

Winnie was an instructor who had been recently hired. About a month into the semester the informant began to receive complaints regarding Winnie's teaching methods. Students related that she smiled at them but told them "awful" things about their behaviour and made them feel "very badly about themselves." She would also disparage their performance in front of patients but told the students in private what a "good job" they had done. Students confronted Winnie about her behaviour but there was no improvement. The informant had also received written concerns about the instructor from patients the students had cared for. At the end of the academic year a department committee voted not to renew Winnie's probationary contract. Winnie appealed the decision and the department was required to reconsider her case. Reconsideration produced the same decision, the probationary contract was not renewed.

Situation Two:

Several first year students were required to withdraw from the program because they had failed one component of a course. The students took their complaints to the informant's superordinate. Her decision was that students could not be failed out of a program because they had failed only one section of one course. The students were allowed to remain in the program. Faculty were unable to change the decision. Instead, they developed a system of preadmission testing that would ensure students entering the program had adequate math to be successful in the course.

Situation Three:

The informant, in consultation with faculty, failed a student, Marge, in a practicum course. Marge was not meeting the objectives of the course. She successfully appealed the failure. When Marge returned to the program her performance did not improve. The informant received complaints about Marge from several sources including nurses working at the practicum site. A number of these complaints related to breach of patients' right to confidentiality. When Marge came to the practicum site appearing to be under the influence of a mind altering substance, she was sent home. She was again asked to leave the program. When Marge appealed this decision she was not successful.

Situation Four:

A faculty selections committee recommended hiring an instructor who was an excellent teacher but who had done no scholarly work and had no plans to further her graduate education. This instructor had been teaching for the

department on a sessional basis for several years. The informant, new to the administrative position, had the authority to make final hiring decisions. She decided not to employ this person. The instructor appealed the decision and eventually lost after a lengthy process. Faculty members supported the instructor and resented the informant's decision.

Situation Five:

Several students failed an assignment in a course, taught by a team of instructors. Most of the team members agreed with the failures. However, one instructor, Sophia, felt that the students who had failed were at a disadvantage because of the way in which they had written the assignment. Sophia sent a memo to her colleagues, to the informant, and the informant's superordinate stating that she felt the assignment was unfair. Team members became very upset with Sophia and with each other, resulting in a "flurry of memos" and complaints to the informant. "Everybody was mad at everybody." Faculty were also upset that the problem had "gone out of the team and then out of the department."

Situation Six:

Several faculty members were up for tenure and promotion in the same year. The departmental tenure review committee recommended one instructor for tenure but not the others. The instructors were notified of the decision and had 10 days in which to respond. Then the process moved to an inter-departmental review committee. One of the instructors who was not recommended went immediately to the union. The union informed the informant that proper assessment procedures had not been followed. Meanwhile the inter-departmental committee met and raised concerns regarding the instructors' applications. Before that committee had time to complete its work the union went to the senior academic officer of the organization. The officer intervened and extended the instructors' probation. Members of the tenure review committee felt like they had been "hung out to dry."

Situation Seven:

A nursing department hired several new instructors in the same year. These instructors were expert clinicians but most of them had no teaching experience. More experienced faculty members continued to offer their assistance to the new instructors over the year. However, the new instructors did not avail themselves of this assistance and formed a tight little clique. Numerous times over the year the informant observed that the new instructors appeared stressed. When the informant asked if there was anything she could do for them, they said no. About six months into the academic year, at a department meeting, the situation exploded. The new instructors voiced a number of complaints, for example, lack of support form the experienced instructors and that they felt intimidated by the informant. Attempts to rectify the situation were unsuccessful and a number of the new instructors resigned their positions.

Situation Eight:

A faculty decision making group was preparing a proposal for a new program requested by community stakeholder. Schedules were important in order to meet deadlines for organizational approval of the program. Committee members became bogged down and missed important deadlines. When the informant and other colleagues offered assistance committee members refused, stating this was their job and that administration was interfering with instructors' right to make their own decisions.

Situation Nine:

A dinner meeting for department chairpeople was held at an all male club. The informant, being a women, was not allowed to enter the club and thus was unable to attend this meeting. She was upset and voiced her concerns to the chair of the group.

Situation Ten:

The informant came to a new position, inheriting a situation where there were numerous conflicts taking place and faculty members were very unhappy. They perceived that they had not been respected for what they had to offer, that their opinions had not been considered. The informant appointed an instructor who had the general approval of her colleagues as her assistant. The informant asked her assistant to prepare a reply for a request for information. The letter was unacceptable and the informant refused to sign it. When asked why she had done this the instructor stated, "Nobody around here accepts what somebody does anyway."

Situation Eleven:

The informant and a colleague from another program were collaborating to institute a new program. Planning advanced well and the proposal was sent to government for final approval. A high level bureaucrat called a meeting of the administrators involved and announced that the program would not be approved. The informant sought the assistance of the president of her organization, who in turn solicited the help of her counterparts in other stakeholder organizations. These senior administrators formed a coalition that lobbied the bureaucrats and politicians. Program approval was obtained.

Situation Twelve:

Mildred was an instructor who had a history of problems related to her teaching and interpersonal relationships with students and colleagues. She was teaching a nursing course with a practicum component. During the semester Mildred began to exhibit irrational behaviours when interacting with students. For example, she went to a student's place of employment and dragged the student out of a meeting, causing the student embarrassment and difficulties with her supervisor. Mildred was giving students irrational directions in the theory and practica areas of the course. Several times during the semester students voiced complaints to administration about Mildred. They were distraught and "just trying to get through the course." Final grades were "skewed toward the bottom" of the scale. All but two students appealed their grades. Grades were reassessed and students were counselled individually and in groups. Actions were taken to ensure Mildred's behaviour did not continue to "damage students."

Situation Thirteen:

The informant needed additional funding for her department and was working with an organizational committee to educate them about the need. Instructors were anxious to show their support and offered to send a letter to the committee. The informant perceived this would be regarded as a lack of trust in her abilities to represent them. She informed the faculty members that she would rather not have them send the letter. However, the instructors wrote the letter and asked the informant to sign it. She refused saying she had every opportunity to discuss the matter face-to-face with committee members. The informant was successful in acquiring the funds for her department; however, she perceived that by not signing the letter she may have decreased faculty trust in her.

Situation Fourteen:

An instructor's request for an educational leave was turned down because the approval committee judged her proposal was weak. The faculty member had brought a draft of the proposal to the informant for perusal beforehand. The informant had assessed it and provided feedback and suggestions for improvement to the instructor. The instructor appealed the decision and lost. Although the informant had supported the leave proposal, the instructor blamed the informant and would not accept any responsibility for the leave refusal.

Situation Fifteen:

At the beginning of her second year of teaching, an instructor experienced some personal problems. Students began coming to the informant with their concerns regarding the instructor, for example, "putting them down and not being supportive." The informant recommended the students approach the instructor regarding the problem, which they did. Evaluations at the end of the semester reflected the same problems. With counselling, the instructor's performance improved somewhat over the remainder of the year. However, during the fall term of her third year of teaching the problems recurred. The instructor applied for tenure that year. On the basis of student and peer evaluations tenure was denied.

Situation Sixteen:

A student, Ella, who had failed a program returned to complete the final year. She became "buddies" with another student, Mary, who was experiencing difficulties. Within a short time the informant and her superordinate began to receive numerous complaints from students in the senior class regarding the performance of the instructors and the informant. After several weeks the informant received a complaint from a practicum site requesting that she remove Mary from the placement because "the student was interfering with clients' treatment regimes." One of the practicum sites where Ella was to go refused to have her back because of previous "unethical and unprofessional" behaviour.

Situation Seventeen:

The informant, who was new to her position, became aware that an instructor had been taking paid leaves to pursue graduate study. These leaves were occurring during spring and summer semesters and exceeded the allotted holiday and professional development time specified by the collective agreement. When informed by the instructor that she would be taking another such leave, the informant questioned the manner and equity of the request.

Situation Eighteen:

The informant had been having difficulties with Irene, a tenured faculty member, for a protracted period of time. Numerous complaints had been received from students, colleagues, support staff, and practicum site staff and administrators. Students maintained that Irene was a terrible role model, was never satisfied with their work, made them feel incompetent and worthless when they asked questions in class, refused to consider individual student's requests, and lost control of her behaviour in the classroom. When the informant tried to approach Irene about these problems the response was a memo rather than a face-to-face meeting. Attempts to provide Irene with academic and psychological counselling proved unsuccessful. The informant stated that she was very frustrated and that this ongoing situation was likely to "come to a head eventually."

Situation Nineteen:

Two first year students failed their nursing courses. When they came to see the informant, they were upset and crying. The informant outlined their options. She perceived that they had understood her and had accepted the options. On the last day of the semester the informant received a call from a senior administrator of the organization. She requested the informant come to her office immediately. When the informant arrived, the two students were there. The senior administrator stated that she thought the students should be given another chance. The informant queried the senior administrator's role in this situation but could not ask for an explanation because the students were present. The informant felt "put upon" because the senior administrator had bypassed regular processes.

Situation Twenty:

A government bureaucrat questioned a proposal the informant and her colleagues had submitted. The informant approached her professional association, the provincial nurses' union, former students, and others in an effort to form a coalition of nurses to lobby government and the politicians for approval of the new program. The coalition came into being, educating nurses in the political lobbying process, and mounting a successful campaign.